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THE LONG WALK

by SLAVOMIR RAWICZ

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VICTOR CANNING

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TOSCANINI

SPEED IN MY BLOOD
The success story of the fastest man afloat
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TEMPLE BAR 2468 JANUARY 28 1956 VOLUME 99 NUMBER 2587

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Rawicz with a model he carved of the axe given him by the wife of his prison commandant

FOR Slavomir Rawicz the nightmare of the Long Walk (page 9) did not end with his year's trek to freedom. In hospital in Calcutta he collapsed into a delirium in which he relived every moment of his escape.

Nurses watched as each day he ate only half his bread and slyly tucked the rest under his pillow. Each day they brought in great white hospital loaves to convince him that he would never have to worry about food again. The assurances meant nothing. Rawicz went on storing bread.

One night he took out his store of food, rolled up the bedclothes and set off through the ward. Two orderlies halted him, and he fought savagely to break free.

He awoke one morning feeling fit and refreshed, as if he had enjoyed a good night's sleep—and could not believe that the night had been four weeks long.

When he was well, Rawicz joined exiled Poles fighting in the Middle East, and when the war ended he was training as an R.A.F. navigator in Britain. He still lives here, and might, by now, have become naturalized. But he shrugs and says: "I am a Pole. One day, perhaps, things will change, and I shall go back."

NORMAN MANSBRIDGE, who illustrates Breton Amis's story of a riotous baby contest on page 14, has had plenty of time to study babies. He and his wife, Edna, have two children of their own—John, aged seven, and Ann, five.

"When John was a baby," says Mansbridge, "I began a painting of my wife bottle-feeding him. The painting went on and on. It took so long that the baby became too big for my wife to hold in the same position. The painting is still unfinished."

Mansbridge has been drawing all his life. After art school in London and a few years in an advertising studio, he became a freelance when he was twenty. Now forty-four, he has been a freelance ever since. At the same time he has been an A.F.S. fireman, a schoolmaster, a seaman with a roving commission as a war artist (he was torpedoed off Trinidad, and says: "Perhaps I am the first artist to have swum in the Caribbean with his boots on"), a prison warder ("I once played draughts with a murderer in the condemned cell"), and has written two books.

He never uses models for his illustrations. "But people often accuse me of putting them in my drawings. I hope nobody accuses me of that this time."

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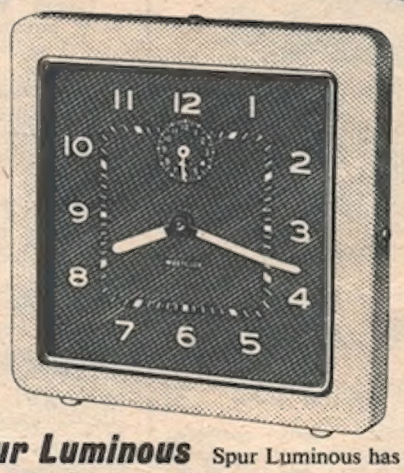

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Free Speech

- **Health in cafés—by order**
- **Can a spinster adopt a child?**
- **The friendly road to peace**

A LOT of sensible steps have been taken to improve hygiene in hotels and restaurants, and in the handling of food generally.

But one important point has been overlooked in Britain. Thirty years ago, when I worked in the catering trade in America, no one could get a job handling food—even serving bottled drinks—without a clean bill of health from a state doctor.

This law was strictly enforced, and speaking as a restaurant owner I believe it ought to be considered in Britain, also.—A. H. NIGHTINGALE, Broadstairs.

Early this century in the U.S.A. a cook (who became known as Typhoid Mary) spread typhoid in several states as a "carrier"; the authorities finally imprisoned her. As a result of these outbreaks, Americans today have strict food hygiene laws, although they vary from state to state.

A British doctor says: "Health control in this country is so good that serious diseases are not likely to be spread by food handling. You can't compel personal cleanliness through legislation alone."

Brick Scrubbers

Dutch housewives may scrub the pavements ("Free Speech," January 7), but in Yorkshire and Lancashire wives not only scrub the pavements and yellow-stone the steps and sills every Friday, but have been known to wash the bricks at the front of the house as well.—MRS. C. M. BAILEY, Leeds, 8.

Easy Job

If British engineers can produce ships like the Queens and planes like the Comet, surely they can find a way of putting electric lamps on trains ("Free Speech," January 7).

How many householders living near railways would mind being illuminated for a few seconds to save travellers' lives?—K. PESTELL, London, E.5.

Ideal Ticket

London Transport should follow the example of Reading and Blackpool, and advertise on the back of the new roll-type tickets. The extra income would help to check the steady rise in fares.—H. C. CHAMBERLAIN, Romford, Essex.

"After years of experiment we have found the ideal ticket-printing machine for rush-hour work," says London Transport. "It was invented by a former superintendent at our Stockwell depot. Advertising on the new tickets has yet to be considered." Blackpool hope to save £300 in their first year of ticket advertising.

Mud Shower

Another "Ill Wind" ("Free Speech," December 17) blew in 1944, when Vesuvius erupted and I was moved to Bari, about 150 miles from Naples.

Two days later, a great cloud of lava dust hung over the town like a storm cloud. Then it began to rain mud.—E. J. P., Chelmsford.

A south wind was blowing at the time of this eruption, and it is not unusual for dust to be blown hundreds of miles and form muddy rain. When the Pacific island of Krakotoa blew up in August, 1883, dust circled the globe many times, causing colourful sunsets years later.

Not So Comic

Dave King, and other modern comedians, no doubt have their points ("Dave King's Foolproof Comedy," JOHN BULL, December 24). But how many of them can, like the late Harry Lauder and Will Fyffe, compose their own songs and patter, dispense with a microphone, sing really well, dance acceptably, and do excellent character acting?

How many keep their acts absolutely free from the vulgar and the suggestive, and dispense with manufactured "wise-cracks"?

Comedians are not what they were.—A. H., Southend.

Bikinis Banned

My photograph shows a woman of the Herero tribe of South-West Africa, where I lived for years. She is wearing a long dress of a type which the natives adopted from the wives of the early German missionaries. No matter if the shade temperature is 110 degrees Fahrenheit, these women

still insist on their long dresses, and look down on the lightly clad women of the tribes farther north.—J. MUDD, London, S.E.5.

Herero women still wear dresses of the mid-Victorian era. Christian women in other parts of Africa wear long frocks, or white blouses with long black skirts. In towns, the younger women wear attractive European cotton frocks. These are usually less revealing—from choice—than the frocks white girls wear.

Need Of Children

For nearly two years now I have looked for an orphan child to make my own. I have a pleasant home, and sufficient money to provide adequately for a son or daughter, but because I have no husband, adoption societies will not consider my application.

I have seen many homes, with numerous children, and I know that the little ones would be far happier with a mother.—VALERIE HOBBS, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham.

"There is no law to prevent single people adopting children," says a county adoptions officer, "but there are far more people seeking to adopt a child than there are children to adopt." The Church of England Adoption Society adds: "The lack of a father is often the reason why a mother parts with her baby; with so many childless couples applying to us, naturally we give them preference. A single woman can often help by acting as an 'aunt' to a children's home."

Button Holed

Since 1915, starched shirts and collars have become obsolete. Soft collars ought to be fastened at the back by a button, but shirt makers still put a button-hole there, and

stud makers provide the same type of stud as for starched collars.—D. MACCONNELL, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

"There is no demand for buttons," says a member of the shirt trade, "simply because studs are more efficient. Some men buy collars too large for them, and these give trouble however they are fastened."

Perfect Gentleman

"Football's Gentle Giant" (JOHN BULL, December 10) reminded me of Leeds United's visit to Plymouth.

It was a sunny day, and Bill Shortt, the Plymouth goalkeeper, seemed to find it difficult to see. John Charles asked him what the trouble was, then ran the full length of the field to where two women were selling tea from a glass-sided trolley. The sun was reflecting from the glass into the goalie's eyes.

Throughout the game John was the perfect gentleman.—J. M. MANUEL, Wirral, Cheshire.

Peace From Love

Walter Elliot's "A Life Worth Living" (JOHN BULL, December 24) is a muddled piece of thinking based on blatantly humanistic theories.

Elliot regards peace as merely the cessation of war, and claims it may be just around the corner because the great nations are afraid of modern warfare. What sort of "peace" can be founded on fear? Trust and confidence need to be established among the nations, and these spring from Love, not from diplomatic trickery.

Christianity, as a practical way of life, does not appear to have any place in government policies any more. And, for all his reference to the Faith that made Britain great, Elliot might never have heard of Jesus Christ.—REV. PRYS DARBYSHIRE-ROBERT, Holywell, Flintshire.

Donors Out East

The blood transfusion service is doing a wonderful job ("Out For Blood," JOHN BULL, December 31) and the R.A.F., I am glad to say, does what it can to help.

Here in Singapore we are encouraged to give blood, and a chart in the waiting room at the hospital

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Wives of successful men-

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

shows that Europeans are generous donors while the Chinese are the greatest consumers. Among the comforts offered to donors are biscuits, cigarettes, tea, coffee, orange cordial and beer.—E. W., R.A.F. Seletar, Singapore, Malaya.

Dangerous Whoop

As a teacher, I am pleased that Dr. W. R. Perry, medical officer of health for Basford rural district, in Nottinghamshire, is prepared to recommend the prosecution of the parents of children who "whoop" in public.

Admittedly some youngsters, when taking in breath, give a sort of whooping sound although, in fact, they have only a tiresome cough. But even in this case they should be kept indoors.—V. C., Solihull, Birmingham.

Under the Public Health Act of 1936, local authorities can take powers to prosecute parents who allow their children to spread contagion.

"I tried to draw attention to a difficult local problem," says Dr. Perry. "When parents are thoughtless, whooping cough spreads fast."

Good For Business

Newspaper sellers and small business men beat big firms in the art of eye-catching notices. A coffee bar window announced: "Wanted urgently—customers. No experience required."—G. BARTRAM, Birmingham, 20.

Holiday In Lapland

Last year I spent a holiday at Mo-i-rana, in northern Norway, and stayed for a whole day with a Lapp family related to Mikel Utsi the reindeer man (JOHN BULL, December 17).

A baby, three months old, was in a cradle hung from the ceiling

by a rope, and we sat on reindeer and elk skins, eating dried reindeer meat and home-made cheese and bread.

The photograph is of myself—I am twelve years old—and was taken outside the Utsi hut in Swedish Lapland. They were a most hospitable and friendly family, and we were surprised to find a collie among their dogs.—ISOBEL REES, Middlesbrough.

Smuggled A King

The "Crossroads Of The World" series is a fascinating one to a man who knows the Middle East.

After the first World War, I was in Damascus when a colonel, who introduced himself as the British representative there, asked if I would smuggle three gentlemen to Haifa by car. I agreed to the trip, and recognized the late King Feisal among my passengers.

He had been in command of Arab forces which entered Damascus in 1918, and was acclaimed King of Syria. But in July, 1920, he was defeated and expelled by the French, who wanted to hang him.

I knew, during our escape, that if we were caught I should probably hang, also. However, we reached Haifa safely on the second night.—A. M., Inchinnan, Renfrewshire.

Neon Religion

Here in Toronto, churches are run increasingly on business lines. Many have neon signs, and most display large advertisements. The majority of Saturday newspapers devote two large pages to religious announcements, headlining preachers as if they were film stars.

In fact, films like "Dead Men Tell No Tales" are shown in church, although cinemas in Ontario are not allowed to open on a Sunday.

This has tended to turn me away from the churches in Canada.—A. C. DAVIES, Toronto, Ontario.

Landed Poor

I know why one agricultural worker—my husband—left the land ("Free Speech," December 24). He had worked on a farm for years, but received a fortnight's notice without being told why.

We were living in a tied cottage, of course, and found ourselves, in the middle of the winter, with no house, no job and no money.

In the end, my husband found work in a factory, at pounds more a week.—G. B., Derby.

. . . When you have to break the ice to wash, walk a mile for bread, and live in primitive conditions generally, it's surprising that anyone remains on the land.—F. P., Hants.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

SCHOOLDAY talk of team spirit is all very fine, but it's a poor swap for a solo goal and a taste of glory. The winning shot, a light soprano roar from the fans, and a society queen starts her career—or a *femme fatale* perhaps. Tomorrow's heroines, in fact, score winning goals today. Meanwhile, the game is very much the thing; jam tarts, fizzy lemonade and a glistening new blazer badge are the fruits of victory. And even Mays's spreadeagled goalie can share in hockey's sweetest reward—the amiable aftermath. Team spirit comes in handy for the losers.

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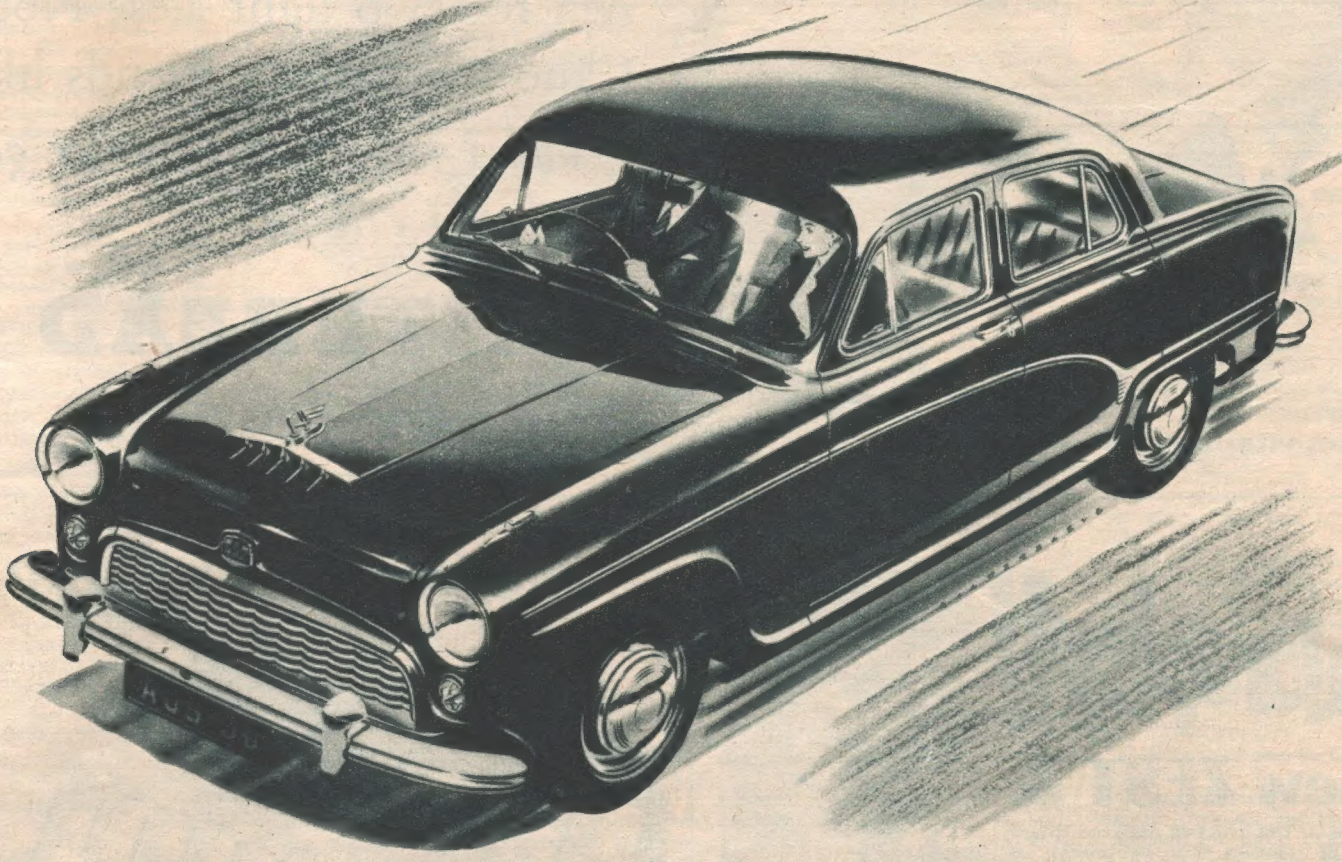

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SLAVOMIR RAWICZ begins the real-life story of his escape from Siberia—the desperate march from slavery of seven men and a girl

THE LONG WALK

USHAKOVA'S clear blue eyes looked intently into mine. Then she said: "Do you ever think of escape?" The question, so startling and unexpected, made me panic. There was awful danger in it. For there I was, Slavomir Rawicz, a young Pole serving a twenty-five year sentence in a Siberian slave-labour camp, being asked if I was planning to escape. And the questioner was the wife of my jailer, the Russian camp commandant.

I opened my mouth and could not speak. I put down the cup I was holding with a clumsy thump and all the while her eyes held mine. I heard her say: "You do not answer, Rawicz. You do not trust me. I thought you might want to talk about it. There is no danger in talking to me about it. . . ."

Escape! It was as though she had looked into my mind and plucked out that one word of danger and longing and hope. Yes, I wanted to tell her about my perilous dreams. But she had shocked me into silence. The words would not come. . . .

The events that led to my plotting escape from a Siberian prison began on November 19, 1939, at my home in Pinsk on the old Russian-Polish border. I

Manacled to heavy chains, the prisoners staggered through the snow. A tenth of them died on the road

was then twenty-four, a lieutenant in the Polish cavalry. Poland had fallen before the German onslaught, and I had made my way back to Pinsk, now overrun by the Russians. I had scarcely time to greet my wife, Vera, whom I had married only a few months before, when the Russian security men walked in. They had come to arrest me on a charge of spying.

I was taken to a prison at Minsk, then to Kharkov and finally to the Lubyanka Prison in Moscow. All the while the questioning went on, month after month of it for a whole year. Wasn't it true that I had worked for the Polish *Dwojka* (Army Intelligence)? Wasn't it true that I had crossed the Russian border several times? Wasn't it true that I had talked to this man, that man? Wasn't it true that I spoke Russian fluently?

Only one question was true, the last. I did speak fluent Russian, for my mother was a Russian and had taught me the language since I was a boy.

The questioning was accompanied by the usual breaking down process: beatings, the drugging of my food, the torture of hot tar falling drop by drop on to my skin—all aimed at forcing me to sign a "confession." But I had nothing to confess. So I did not sign, and the questioning went on.

Then, one day in November, 1940, I was ordered from my cell and taken before the Soviet Supreme Court. My trial lasted for four days, and when at length the farce was over the president of the court stood up and read the charges. He announced that the court had found me guilty of espionage and plotting against the people of the U.S.S.R. Then came the sentence.

"You will therefore be sentenced to twenty-five years' forced labour."

"And that," said a blue-uniformed major on the president's right, "should be ample time to restore your shocking memory."

Strangely, I felt that a great weight had been lifted from me. Now, at least, I knew my fate.

A WEEK later I was on a cattle-truck train with a horde of other prisoners bound for Siberia. It was a nightmare journey that lasted for four weeks and ended three thousand miles away at Irkutsk, near the southern tip of the great Lake Baikal.

Our guards walked down the train removing the seals and unbarring the trucks and ordering, "All out. The trip's over." We stumbled out and a shrieking, whipping wind and a sub-zero temperature made us gulp and gasp. In a few minutes ears became icy cold, noses purple-red and eyes streamed tears. It was the second week in December, and Siberia was already fast bound in winter. We met it clad only in trousers, canvas shoes and thin cotton blouses.

There was some milling about, a shouting of orders and we formed into a long, untidy column—a crowd of perhaps four thousand prisoners, headed, tailed and flanked by soldiers. We shambled off, heads bent against the wind, trousers soaked to the knees in the snow and slush churned up by those ahead.

The march took us up five miles across country, out of sight and sound of the railway. Our resting place was to be no haven for drooping travellers. We stopped and broke out of ranks in a vast, wind-swept potato field. Nowhere, as far as the eye could see, was there a building of any sort. Men stood in the snow and looked bleakly at one another. All the tears were not caused by the cutting wind.

We did not stand aimlessly around for long. It was urgently necessary to get out of the paralysing blast of the wind. One group started to heap snow into a windbreak. The idea spread rapidly. Soon there was feverish toiling to make little snow-ringed compounds. Men scraped and scratched away with numb fingers down to the rock-hard black earth and then crouched down behind the windbreak. Food and steaming tin mugs of unsweetened ersatz coffee were doled out from a mobile field kitchen.

We spent three days in the potato field, and more prisoners joined us. Soon, there were not fewer than five thousand men in the field. Some lorries drove in on that third day and the soldiers ran round. The word rippled out from those closest to lorries, "Clothes! New clothes!" And new clothes it was. It took hours to make the distribution, but when it was over each man had exchanged his flimsy *rubashka* for the Russian winter top garment, the *fufaika*, a thigh-length, buttoned-to-the-throat, kapok-padded jacket, in a material which can best be likened, in quality, to the heavy blackout cloth used in millions of British homes during the war. With the jackets came a pair of padded winter trousers and stout rubberized canvas boots. By all normal standards we were still abjectly dressed for a Siberian winter, but the additional warmth we felt was extraordinary.

Next day a convoy of about sixty powerful lorries arrived. Just behind the cabin they carried tall, cylindrical gas generators, the fuel for which was eight-inch lengths of birch and ash, known to the Russians as *churki*. The lorries had no sides and were open to the

In the middle of the night a hand tapped my shoulder. It was Smith, clutching a bag under his arm. "Now!" he whispered

Suddenly, Ushakova said: "Do you ever think

weather and had machine-gun platforms mounted against the drivers' cabins.

As we watched them bumping and rolling in, the orders started to fly and we knew that the last stage of our journey was about to begin. For many it would be the last stage of any journey they would know on this earth.

With the lorries came more soldiers hooded in balaclavas and wearing warm sheepskin gloves. Immediately they checked the list of prisoners' names. As each batch of one hundred names was ticked off, the men were led away.

The soldiers were detailed into sections of about twenty, and each section was disposed to guard one hundred prisoners, strung out two abreast behind each lorry.

There had been a low buzz of talk all the way down the great line of men. Suddenly it was stilled, cut short in shock and appalled surprise, as from each lorry was uncoiled a length of heavy steel chain of about one inch diameter. A soldier in my detachment walked between the two men at the head of my column, forcing them apart, and then walked through the middle cleaving us into two single lines. Other soldiers followed him, running out the chain.

On shouted instructions, we picked up the chain with the hand nearest to it. I was about half-way along with my left side to the chain. I remember thinking I was lucky not to have to use my wounded right hand, which was still open, raw and painful. The chain was brand

ILLUSTRATED BY OLIPHANT

of escape?" Her words made me panic, and I heard her say: "There is no danger in talking to me"

new, still coated with some dark, sticky, anti-rust compound, and its coldness struck the hand almost like a burn. Then, fifty men a side, we were handcuffed to the chain by one wrist. Three guards took station on each side, spaced along the line, the section commander climbed into the cab alongside the driver and the remaining troops piled quickly into the back of the lorry. We were ready to start. The prisoners remained very silent.

Like some great, slowly uncoiling reptile, the long procession began to move, the lorry at the head setting the pace, a fair walking speed of about four miles an hour.

We trudged non-stop for twelve hours or more through that first dark night at the beginning of the third week in December. The leading lorry lighted the way with the beam of bright lamps. We struggled on, obeying the insistent pull of the chain, still wondering where we were going, fearful of how long we should have to march on in this killing cold.

The road was obviously well known and I had no doubt that this first long drag by night was intended to take us clear of any villages near Irkutsk, unseen by their inhabitants. In the following days the programme was one of day marches and night halts, but the route was still chosen to avoid places where we might be seen.

A halt was called about half an hour after dawn in a wooded depression between two hills. We were all stiff, weighed down with heavy-limbed fatigue, cold and hungry. That first stop lasted only a couple of hours, long enough for a field kitchen which had accompanied us to brew up hot coffee and for the soldiers to distribute the bread ration. The heat of the coffee was like a breath of warm life, and we ate ravenously of our bread. We were not unshackled from the chain and soon we were on the move again, this time in daylight.

Over the exposed places on high ground the wind howled like a chorus of demons, our feet slipped in the churned-up snow, tips of fingers, ears and noses felt the insidious attack of frost-bite. And, even this early, the toll of death started. A shout passed from a contingent well behind us was relayed along by the walking sentries until it reached the transport commandant. The leading lorry stopped, the rest stopped. Some poor prisoner was unshackled, his body removed. Taking my own section as typical, the death rate was to reach more than ten per cent before the long trek was over.

It was difficult to appreciate that we were following any kind of regular road. Everything was blanketed with thick snow. But every hundred yards or so would be a stout stake about eight feet tall topped by a clump of dried hay or small twigs, like a succession of witches' brooms. These, I guessed, were route markers. They were with us for miles up steep hills, down into forested valleys, across the fording places of hard-frozen rivers. There were times when even the chain-bound lorry wheels began to slip and then the soldiers would jump down and put their shoulders into a helping heave, and we prisoners, motivated only by a desire to get to our resting place as soon as possible, would add our weight.

Few of the marchers had any doubt of our direction. We were pushing north—almost due north—out towards the upper end of Irkutsk province towards the great sprawling area of Yakutsk. We were headed north from Latitude 50 N to Latitude 60 N and beyond, up towards the Arctic Circle, and the Siberian weather got worse as we went forward.

We were hit by three tearing blizzards in the course of our march. The first one slowed the convoy almost immediately until we were creeping along, heads well down, at only a slow shuffle. It was almost impossible to open the eyes to it. The snow packed on our matted hair and beards, coated the lorries and the taut chains, mantled the soldiers exposed to it ahead and above us, crouched forward near their whitened machine-gun.

Somehow someone learned during the second week of the march that it was December 24. The news went up and down the long, struggling line like the leaping flame of a forest fire. "It's Christmas Eve," went the whisper from man to man. Away back behind us there was suddenly a thin wavering sound. It was odd and startling. It grew in volume and swept towards us. It was the sound of men singing, men singing with increasing power in the wastes of the Siberian wilderness.

I thought the soldiers would have been ordered to shout us down, but the mounting song reached us unchecked and engulfed us. I was singing and Grechinen, the man alongside me, was singing. Everybody who had a voice left was joining in. A marching choir of nearly five thousand male voices drowning their despair in a song of praise for the Child who would be born on the morrow. The song was "Silent Night," and those who did not sing it in Polish sang it in the language in which they had learned it as children.

Then a few voices started the Polish Christmas carol, "Jesus' Lullaby," and I choked on it and fell silent. And half-way through it, others broke down and wept quietly. The Lullaby died abruptly and there was no more singing. Our hearts were full to bursting with the memories of other Christmases.

Christmas Day came and went like any other of the dreary succession of marching days. We walked into our second blizzard and walked out of it. Grechinen and I between us supported the man directly ahead of him for hours during this second storm, calling on the guards to help him. "He'll manage all right," said one of them. He died barely half an hour before we reached the night's stopping place.

It must have been in the last week in January, 1941, when we had spent more than forty days on the march, that the third and most violent blizzard hurled itself out of the north and at last bogged down the lorries. The convoy had covered well over eight hundred miles from Irkutsk. After all this, it seemed incredible that the lorries would ever stop their slow thrusting northwards towards the Siberian Arctic. With the dry, powdery snow thrown stingingly into their faces by the howling wind, soldiers and prisoners together worked to keep digging the leading vehicle out of drifts, but there came a time when no expenditure of human effort could prevail. The long line of trucks and men piled forward on itself and raggedly came to a halt.

We were on some kind of main road alongside which ran telephone poles, their wires sagging under the weight of the snow.

The commandant and his junior officers got

Continued on page 50

Beryl Reid is hopelessly funny

by JOHN ENNIS

Worrying in the wings, she's sure that she will never get another laugh. Her comedy characters always prove her wrong

At a rehearsal for a broadcast a few years ago, Beryl Reid, the comedy character actress, listened as a well-known comedian read through his script. When he had finished, she went up to the man and took his script from his hand. With a thick pencil she crossed out three of the jokes he intended to use in the broadcast.

The comedian protested. Miss Reid handed back the mutilated script. "You rely too much on your memory," she told him. "I paid for those gags, and I intend to keep them."

Twenty years of perseverance, with few lucky breaks, have taught Beryl Reid how to fight to keep what she has gained. Since, as a low-paid concert party performer before the war, she risked a half-crown fine if she was not at the theatre half an hour before the curtain rose, she has insisted on upholding a tradition of discipline and what she calls "theatre manners."

After three and a half years as a resident star on the popular radio programme *Educating Archie*, Beryl Reid has recently established herself as one of the funniest women in British television, and her appearances in variety theatres earn her more than £200 a week. "Sometimes," she says, "I feel ashamed to take the money for a job that I enjoy so much."

She still strictly observes theatre etiquette, even when such observance may work against her interests. Before one of her early television performances, Beryl wrote and asked Max Wall if he would mind if she used a joke that she had heard him make about television, explaining that she would understand if he refused. Wall, who has been called the most copied comedian in the business, gave her permission. He added that she was the only person he knew who would have the courtesy to ask.

Beryl was unwilling to become typed in her part of Monica, the awful schoolgirl friend of Archie Andrews and, during 1953, she cast around for a new comedy character. She thought that she had a winner in Fuchsia, a cockney girl with pretensions to grandeur; but when people told her that it sounded fine, "just like Joyce Grenfell," that was the end of Fuchsia. Beryl continued her search.

Ever since her dresser for the 1941 pantomime at Birmingham caught her attention with the unusual greeting "Good evening each," Miss Reid had been a fascinated student of the speech inflexions and idiom of Britain's industrial Midlands. With the help of her husband, Derek Franklin, who comes from Birmingham, and script writer Ronnie Wolfe, she gradually evolved Marlene, the Birmingham bop-club girl.

Beryl was certain that in Marlene she had a character that could be confused with the work of no other comedienne. She dressed herself in a red, pencil-slim skirt, a leopard-skin blouse, a bright blue sloppy joe cardigan and a pair of heel-less shoes. She combed her hair into a bang at the front and a horse tail at the back and, wearing Christmas tree decorations as ear-rings, walked confidently on to the stage of a Midland factory canteen to try out her new idea in a *Workers' Playtime* broadcast.

"I nearly had a heart attack," she recalls. "Here and there along the front row were girls wearing variations of the same style as mine—only they weren't trying to be funny." Miss Reid, who is known as something of a trouper, tucked in her fright and sailed into her act. She found her fears unnecessary. "The girls thought I was very smart, and one said enviously: 'Wheer d'ya git them ear-rings, kid?'"

Marlene was an immediate success as an extra character in *Educating Archie* and, transferred to television, the Birmingham bop-club girl confirmed Beryl Reid as a comedy star in the eyes of millions of viewers. Midlands people who speak rather like Marlene are among her greatest admirers. "My little girl can take you off a

A fan-club sweater is one of Beryl's outfits

As Monica, Beryl Reid wears the gymslip that she had at school

In an *Educating Archie* programme, Beryl swaps gags with James Robertson Justice, Archie Andrews and Peter Brough

when she plays Marlene, the Midlands bop-girl

In pantomime, Beryl (left) appears in a glamorous gown. She loves dressing up for her radio parts

treat," one Birmingham woman told her recently. Beryl says: "Some Midlands people are now convinced that they are imitating me."

With every new production, Beryl always believes that her material is so unfunny that she is bound to fail. Her husband and friends have formed a conspiracy to boost her confidence.

Ronnie Hill, who writes many of her scripts, hands over new material with diffidence, saying: "Probably not very funny, but learn it anyway; we can always change it if you don't like it." When she is in despair, convinced that she will never make another audience laugh, Franklin makes her fight back by wandering about their house chanting "BRING, BRING," which she knows, and he knows she knows, is code for "Beryl Reid Is No Good."

Her early training in theatre discipline makes her anxious to be at the theatre long before she is needed. Ronald Chesney, harmonica player in *Educating Archie*, noticed this anxiety when they were on tour together a few months ago. "Every day she was at the theatre while I was still having tea in the hotel, though I was on twenty minutes before her." Her husband, who is the bass player of the Hedley Ward Trio, says: "At four o'clock every afternoon, she is mentally in the wings, waiting to go on."

The voice she will use for a new character is the last thing that Beryl worries about. Whether the part she has to play is an Eskimo torch singer or a flamenco dancer—and she recently did both in the same show—she must first find the right shoes. "Once my feet are right, the rest is easy," she says.

For her schoolgirl, Monica, she wears heavy brogues. "Clompers," she calls them. A few weeks ago, rehearsing for a pantomime, she ran through a scene in which, as Monica, she had to put a donkey to bed. She was wearing high-heeled sandals, and she confesses that her performance was bad. "I looked like an amateur," she says. "I was embarrassed as the other performers watched me, and I almost said: 'It will be all right when I get the proper shoes on.'"

Roy Speer, producer of *Educating Archie*, says: "Beryl loves dressing up. While *Archie* is being broadcast, she is continually rushing into the wings to change her clothes." The green, disreputable gymslip Beryl wears as Monica is the one she wore at school.

It has been a long, slow climb to the top for Beryl Reid, though she can never remember a time when she was not certain she would make it. At the age of four she told every visitor to her home in Manchester: "I'm going on the stage, you know," and followed this statement with an impromptu entertainment, using her estate agent father's hat and coat for props. As a schoolgirl, she entertained at club concerts.

When she left school in 1936, the sixteen-year-old Beryl took a job in a department store. In six weeks, she was switched through five departments, finishing in the toy department demonstrating a set of toy building bricks. She told the customers everything that she was supposed to tell them and then, unable to bear the thought of children hurting their fingers on the bricks as she was hurting hers, added: "but don't buy them; they are not much good."

As the junior, she had to go for lunch at eleven thirty, before she was hungry. That was the last straw. She used her lunch hour for an audition that led to a job in a concert party at Bridlington, and followed this with a pantomime engagement at Salford, Lancashire.

At the age of seventeen she was in London. She put her props in a brown paper carrier and took them to the office of Tom Arnold, the impresario. Every day for three weeks, she sat in Arnold's waiting-room from nine thirty in the morning until one o'clock and from two thirty until five. A friendly commissionaire in charge of the waiting-room periodically put his head round Arnold's door to announce: "Miss Beryl Reid would like to see you, sir." Arnold eventually gave in. She played in his pantomimes for eight years.

BERYL REID'S ambition is to become known as a star of West End revue. To gain experience in this work, she played eighteen weeks in revues at the Watergate Theatre club in 1954 for a payment of £1 a performance, and starred last summer in a revue at Windsor which was specially written for her. Friends are plotting to bring the Windsor revue into the West End.

Though she continues to worry, Beryl believes that her past experience will carry her through any stage ordeal. During the war she learned, rehearsed and performed, all in twenty-six weeks, 427 different sketches in a series of shows in Glasgow called *Half Past Eight*. There was never a script, and many of the sketches were made up as the actors went along.

One comedian, Jack Tripp, complicated her task by making her laugh at his asides. One night, in a wild attempt to control her hilarity, Beryl said as they were about to go on the stage: "Oh, Jack, let's think of death." This, she reports, made them laugh more than ever.

Beryl considers that the best advice ever given her came from a stagehand at Glasgow Empire, the "English comedians' graveyard." A leading English comic was being booed and barracked while Beryl, on the verge of tears, waited in the wings to go on next. Seeing her distress, the Scots stagehand approached her and said: "Don't worry, lassie. Stand close to the mike, do it quick and loud, and then you can away home."

There are theatres in England that are "comedians' graveyards," too. Whenever Beryl finds herself working in one, she does it quick and loud and close to the microphone.

"It never fails," she says. THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

Second Opinion

by ***BRETON AMIS***

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

It was the most riotous of baby contests. Dirty work was rumoured—one child nobbled, another doped. For the doctor, it could mean the duck pond

DR. GRANT held surgery at Brocken on Tuesday and Friday evenings from six to seven. At the other villages he served, the waiting-rooms were generally full before he arrived, but not at Brocken. Here, his patients ambled in when it suited them, some sucking peppermints to try to fool him they hadn't called at the Dun Cow, others explaining how they had popped next door to get someone to keep an eye on the kids and just hadn't noticed how time passed.

They lived in picturesque cottages that ought to have been condemned and drew their water from a medieval pump green with verdigris; yet Brocken was Dr. Grant's healthiest village, with two centenarians at one end of the scale and the highest birthrate in the county at the other.

Grant had once offered himself as their county council candidate, making a water supply and mains lighting his planks. They had turned out solidly—to vote against him.

"'Tis this way," he had been told. "Council meets Tuesday, when you coom to us. Now if'd been Wednesdays or Thursdays, we'd ha' put you in."

They liked him so much they wouldn't have anyone else. When he went on holiday his locum sat without a patient, telling himself what a cushy job old Grant had, all pay and no work. Nor would they take to the admirable Nurse Simmonds, who ran the clinic with occasional token supervision by him. They came to the surgery to trap him into saying that nurse's diagnosis of nappy rash should have been measles, or that she had been wrong about baby's tonsils because he had a roar like Farmer Ashton's bull. . . .

Grant stood at the window, a grey, shaggy man, watching Reuben Rolls and Jack White sauntering across from the Dun Cow for a shilling's worth of the usual bronchial mixture for old Reuben's tubes, salicylic acid for Jack's rheumatics. He could never discover if they took the stuff, but he knew that Reuben's wife still rubbed his chest with rancid goose fat, and that Jack drank a concoction he brewed from rusty nails.

They were joined by Molly Marsh, who weighed sixteen stone and wondered why she was sometimes short of breath. The three stopped to gossip for five minutes, then headed briskly for the waiting-room.

Grant pinged the bell for someone to join him in the surgery, and they came in together.

"Now, one at a time," he protested.

But old Reuben made it clear that this was business, not pleasure. "We're a depitation, doctor," he explained, "though you can listen-in to me toobs later, if you've got them ear-plugs handy. Like the church organ they sound, afore we found the woodworm in't. You'll remember, doctor, sending us all to the van that coom an' took pictures of our innards?"

Grant had advised them to attend the mass radiography session.

"We h'aint had the pictures," Jack White accused.

Grant told them this meant there was nothing wrong with them, but long experience made him suspect it wasn't the real reason for the deputation, and he was right.

"It's the buzzer," said Jack White eventually. "The annual buzzer for the football club. Last year 'twere new striped jerseys, this year 'tis new goalposts——"

"Not that they'd rec'nize them," said Reuben sourly, "they not having scored this side o' Michaelmas."

"Last year you walked off with the great cake that weighed seven pounds four ounces," Molly Marsh reminded Grant. "You'd just come from Rose Pollard, and that was the weight of her second, you said."

"Molly's mem'ry's like her cooking—hit or miss," said Jack White. Grant realized that he was trapped

GRANT had called at the bazaar to see the vicar, in the hope of getting him to persuade Rose Pollard not to call her second son James McGrory, after him. There were already two James McGrorys in the village, both known as Jim Muggery, and it was becoming embarrassing.

"There isn't a cake competition this year, doctor dear," Molly said, her round face dimpling affectionately. "We're having babies instead—with a silver cup for the bonniest wee bairn," she added, appealing to the Scot in him. "And you're to be the judge."

In Grant's student days, he had been warned that a baby contest could halve a young doctor's income by undermining his patients' faith in his judgment. "Avoid them like the plague," his mentor had advised, and for forty years he had done so.

"This is very flattering," he said, stalling for time, "but I'm sure the excellent Nurse Simmonds would——"

"She wouldn't," said Molly flatly. "And it's

The doctor mounted the platform amid applause. . . . The babies made a lovely picture for a lonely old bachelor

her old mother's birthday on the twelfth, so she can't come."

"H'm," said Grant, his high opinion of the nurse confirmed. "The twelfth, you say. . . ." He consulted his pocket diary. "Three o'clock, I suppose? Now isn't that too bad—I've a special meeting of the hospital committee at three. If it had been the eleventh or the thirteenth I'd have been free as the air."

"'Tis the eleventh," said Jack White, so triumphantly that Grant knew he had been deliberately trapped. "Molly's mem'ry's like her cooking, doctor—hit or miss. So we'll put you down for judge just as we said."

"Aye," said Reuben, "and you'll be as free as the air, doctor, though 'tis the dampness in the air that gives me the wheezes, right here."

He started unbuttoning his shirt. Grant turned the other two out and sounded the old man with his stethoscope. "Keep off the beer and baccy for a week or two, Reuben, if you want this to clear," he said, getting his revenge.

"So I will, doctor dear," Reuben lied. "Grandarter Mary says to say her little Sue's doing fine. A ripe young bundle o' mischief young Sue is. Best baby in Brocken, they do say, thanks to you, doctor."

Other patients arrived and lingered to talk about their infants. Rose Pollard was among them. "You wouldn't have won the great big cake, doctor, if 'tweren't for my Jim Muggery," she recalled. "He's a picture, Jimmy is. Takes more after me than his dad," she added anxiously.

Grant said he was glad to hear it.

In the next fortnight he was lobbied so unmercifully that he tried to think up excuses for not appearing at the bazaar, and actually telephoned Ralph Marsden at the manor to ask if a substitute could be found.

"Not on your life," said the squire firmly. "This is a job for a foreigner and a brave man at that. You've only been here thirty years, Grant, off and on, so you'll be an impartial observer in a village of five hundred souls."

"Five hundred and one," Grant said gloomily. "The grocer's wife had me there until dawn. Couldn't you run a raffle instead?"

"You don't seem to grasp the great issues that are at stake," Marsden chided. "This may mean civil war if you aren't very careful, doctor. For instance, approximately half the babies are delivered by you, and half by Nurse Simmonds. They are nourished by milk from my three tenant farmers, already at loggerheads. Some are Church of England, some Methodist, and I believe we have one Salvationist——"

"Out of the running," Grant grunted. "Teething trouble. What is the age limit?"

"Eighteen months," said the squire. "Sounds like a prison sentence, doesn't it? At the moment young Hubbard is red-hot favourite. James McGrory Hubbard."

Grant winced. "How on earth could I give the cup to him? And what do you mean by red-hot favourite?"

"You know the villagers, doctor. They'll bet on anything from the length of a runner bean to the day the pump goes dry, so how could they resist the nursery stakes? Look in at the Dun Cow any evening and you'll see the latest odds chalked on the darts scoreboard. A lot of money will change hands on your decision."

"Then I shan't come," Grant said forcefully. "I shall telephone the vicar."

The vicar was sympathetic but decidedly uncooperative. The doctor's name was already on the handbills in large red letters, together with his degrees. If he had an urgent call, an acute appendix, perhaps, the contest would assuredly be postponed until he was free.

"I fail to see why you should be worried," the vicar said. "You only have to exercise

your professional judgment, and who should know the children better than you?"

"It's not the children I'm worrying about," said Grant. "This could have repercussions in my surgery. A doctor's most valuable asset is the goodwill he creates among his patients, and this isn't going to create any."

"Oh, I'm sure they'll accept your verdict like sportsmen——"

"And sportswomen?" Grant queried.

"A little jealousy, perhaps," the vicar said blandly. "But no one would dare to accuse you of being partisan."

"They're gambling on it," Grant said. But the vicar thought he heard the church bell summoning him to evensong, and looked forward to their meeting on the eleventh.

RUMOURS came to Grant from various sources. He heard that the favourite, the Hubbard baby, had been nobbled by putting him in the same pen as a non-starter with a severe head cold. He was told of a rush of money on an outsider, the Prettimans' boy. "Doped to the quiff," the squire said. "They're pumping him full of orange juice, rose hip syrup, and a local potion compounded of buttermilk and honey."

Also well-backed was Reuben's granddaughter's Sue, who was being trained in show ring tricks such as sucking her toes with the ease of a gymnast while waving a rattle to attract the judge's attention.

So far, he was told, there had only been two fights at the Dun Cow, one involving Butcher Dawkins, who wanted his scales used instead of those from the clinic, the other the result of a rash offer of 100-8 against the Birtles baby, Joe Birtles the smith taking it as a personal insult. . . .

Grant entered the village hall with real misgivings. It had been specially heated so that the contestants could appear stripped to the waist. Militant mothers were everywhere, clasping their offspring defiantly, ignoring friends and neighbours or being coldly condescending.

Grant heard such barbed compliments as, "So she's putting on a little weight at last, poor dear." . . . "What a darling smile, Milly—or is it the wind?". . . "A pretty coatee, Elsie, though it's a shame to put her in pink with her colouring."

He wondered what the redoubtable Nurse Simmonds would have done in his place. Stopped the nonsense at once, he fancied, by telling them the overheating was bad for the babies, the excitement worse.

They might take it from her, but not from him. They often told him how glad they were he hadn't newfangled notions like Nurse.

The mothers crossed his path as often as they could, trying to catch his eye. The men were more direct.

"'Tis a cinch for young Sue, me darter's darter's darter," old Reuben said. "Everyone says so, so I'll be lookin' in at the surgery tonight, doctor dear, with a pheasant I were given by a friend, not eating game mesself without a licence."

"I've fixed that bumper for you, doctor," said Birtles the smith. "Not a nick in't to show where you hit the churchyard wall. 'Twas a tricky job right enough, but 'tis a pleasure to do anything for you."

"I've managed to get four to one 'gainst our Jim Muggery," said Pollard of the mill. "Looks like I'll be sending the missis for the holiday you say she should have, eh, doctor?"

"My nap is the Blake baby," said the squire. "Legs like a hurdler, and lungs for the distance. None of the others in his class, if you ask me——"

"I don't," snapped Grant.

He had seen referees thrown from the ring, even at amateur boxing matches, and judges chased across racecourses by howling mobs. The village pond was opposite the hall and he had

"Why didn't you tell me?" the doctor demanded. "I knew I could rely on your judgment," replied the nurse

a vision of himself rising out of the green slime, surrounded by outraged mothers and irate fathers.

But having been trapped into this he would stick to the letter of the law. According to the dictionary definition the word "bonny" meant capable of good looks, combined with or arising from the glow of health. All he had to do was to pick the winner. Until today the babes of Brocken had been his pride; after today he doubted if he would see them again. . . .

"Ready, doctor?" the vicar called. "The mothers are to sit on the platform chairs with the infants in their laps. We have thirteen entrants, numbered with the cards from the summer sports."

A prophetic number, Grant thought. Doctors shouldn't be superstitious, but he had Celtic blood in him.

TO an outburst of applause he mounted the platform, cursing himself for being tricked into this, and cursing the villagers for thrusting it on him.

Some of the babies were dozing, others sitting wide-legged, wide-eyed, and bored, a few yelling lustily. They made a lovely picture for a lonely old bachelor, he thought sentimentally, and so did the young mothers who held them.

He walked up and down the row, prodding here, poking there, peering into yawning mouths, brushing tufts of silky hair with the palm of his hand. A pride of babies—or a plague of them? Should it be Reuben's great-granddaughter, daintily sucking her big toe, or Rose Pollard's Jim Muggery, sloe-eyed with a milk-white skin; or the Prettiman outsider who was a splendid advertisement for the old supplies of rose hip syrup that Nurse Simmonds had been trying to unload; or the squire's fancy, baby Blake, who looked every ounce a winner? But so did they all. . . . He wished there were thirteen silver cups instead of the solitary one blinking at him from the table as though enjoying his dilemma.

He said the usual things. . . . "The finest bunch of healthy children I've ever seen. . . . Most difficult to come to a decision. . . . A great credit to the parents and to Nurse Simmonds——"

"And to you, doctor," purred many voices.

"One might say this calls for a photo finish, the runners being so close," he went on desperately. "As it is, I shall write my decision on this slip of paper and leave it to Mr. Marsden to announce the winner."

The squire scowled at him, but Dr. Grant's mind was made up. All his life his lucky number had been seven, and today he needed luck, not judgment. On the seventh he had taken his first degree, on the seventh he had received his first appointment as a houseman, on the seventh Nurse Simmonds had come to the village, modern and efficient, to take a great load of work from his shoulders. . . .

He dare not look at the mothers as the squire read the result.

"Number seven wins! Now let's see, number seven is the Blake baby"—What did I tell you? said the squire's swift glance—"Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Blake, and. . . ."

His voice was lost in the polite applause, led by the vicar. "Now you'd better sprint for your car while I guard the rear," he muttered to Grant.

But to Grant's relief the verdict was being taken well, if with a certain reserve. The mothers filed sedately out to their prams, talking in serious whispers, but giving him fleeting reproachful smiles. The fathers seemed reconciled to their losses, for they shook his hand.

"Women!" said old Reuben, enigmatically. "'Twas all their talk that started it."

GRANT was baffled. He had expected tumult and tears, but not only was it passing off peacefully, his prestige seemed mysteriously enhanced.

What was more, old Reuben brought the pheasant to the surgery later.

"Fair enough, doctor dear," he croaked. "The women said Nurse were wrong, but we should've knowed."

"Known what?" Grant probed.

"Nurse were right," he explained. "She give 'em marks at the clinic, week by week, for the best baby, and a rare ole row there was when the Blake brat topped the lot. Went to the squire they did, in a depitation, and he said it called for a second opinion, like what they get in hospital when the doctor doesn't know if you'll live or die."

"So the squire was in this double deal," Grant said grimly. "And the vicar?"

"Not him, doctor dear, nor the pastor. Just us and the womenfolks that wanted to be sure. They'd take your word, anywhere. If you'd picked another baby I reckon Nurse would be drove out."

Grant saw Nurse Simmonds the following week, as crisp, neat and clinical as ever.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he demanded.

"But doctor, that wouldn't be fair," she answered primly. "I knew I could rely on your judgment as well as I could on my own. That Blake baby. . . ." She rattled off technical points that convinced him babies had changed a lot since his days, if they were so complex.

"Of course, it was a foregone conclusion," he said austerely, "but we won't have any more baby shows. And from now on, Nurse, I don't think you'll have any more trouble here."

"That's what I thought." She flashed him a sudden twinkling, human glance. "I've a lot to learn from you, doctor dear."

The last word may have been Grant's imagination, but he hoped it wasn't. He realized he was beginning to get very fond of Nurse Simmonds. THE END

SPEED IN MY BLOOD (2): This was it. After years of work I was beating the world record. Then came a noise like thunder

I drive Bluebird to disaster

by DONALD CAMPBELL

At Lake Coniston, Campbell (right) gazes down at the wreck of Bluebird II. Twelve months later he was planning a new craft

Campbell with his sister Jean, the wife of his friend and colleague Brian Hulme

LOOKING back, I think it was plain stubbornness that made me decide to go out and improve my father's world water speed record. It was March, 1949, three months after Father's death, and I was sitting in his study reminiscing with his old racing friend, "Goldie" Gardner. Almost casually, Goldie mentioned that Henry Kaiser, the American industrialist, had built a new speedboat and was planning to win back my father's record for America.

The idea made me angry. I thought of Father and of the risks he had taken in the Bluebird boats and of the difficulties he had overcome to win supremacy in the sport for Britain. I knew what his reaction would have been to Kaiser's challenge—I could almost see his nose twitching with annoyance. And in that moment of anger I made my decision.

Up till then I had not thought of stepping into Father's shoes. I had never driven a racing speedboat before. Also, the doctors suspected I had a weak heart—a legacy from rheumatic fever—and although I disbelieved this I had given up all ideas of taking up racing. I was now a partner in a prospering machine-tool firm and ready to settle into the groove of business life.

Leo Villa, my father's chief engineer and my guardian angel since childhood, was delighted at my decision. I told him I wanted to make the attempt at Lake Coniston that summer. We would have to work fast, and right away there were some vital decisions to be made. Should we continue to experiment with the jet engine or should we return to screw propellers? My mind was clear: I wanted Bluebird II on the lake as quickly as possible; she had already proved herself with the Rolls-Royce engine, but she had not taken at all kindly to the jet, as Father had discovered.

"Better the devil you know than the one you don't," I said to Leo, who agreed.

Peter Du Cane, of Vospers, the firm that had

"Cast Off" signal from Campbell during trials in Bluebird II on Lake Garda, Italy. Here, in May, 1951, Campbell won the Oltranza Cup

Salvaging Bluebird II. She crashed at 170 miles an hour. Campbell believes that she hit a log

"Goldie" Gardner, the racing motorist, with his wife and child. It was after a talk with Gardner that Campbell decided to try for the world water speed record

build Bluebird in 1938, undertook to have her reconverted to her original design; this meant removing the bearers of the jet engine, together with the jet boat installation, and also altering the top decking. Meanwhile, Leo and I went to fetch Father's three Rolls-Royce engines—the R.19 he used at Coniston, the R.37 he ran at Salt Lake and also the R.39.

We knew that Father had left them with Thompson and Taylor's, a firm which had done a lot of work for Father in the past. We drove over to collect them.

Ken Taylor met us. He looked surprised when I explained the purpose of our visit.

"But your father sold all that gear," he said.

"He *what*?"

"He sold it all with the first Bluebird boat about a year before he died. The whole lot was bought by a car dealer."

This was a surprise blow, but Ken Taylor gave us the address of the dealer and I began negotiations. The dealer drove a hard bargain. In the end I had to pay £750 for the engines—and also hand over Father's old Bluebird racing-car. I hated parting with it and Leo was as unhappy as I was.

THE old team reassembled and we began work on installing the R.37 engine, the shafting, the gearbox and the rudder. Leo worked nearly twenty hours a day and the others worked almost as hard. We were ready to move north on July 22.

Lake Coniston was bathed in sunshine when we arrived, sparkling under blue skies mottled with drifting mounds of white cloud; it was so hot that I had a slight touch of sunstroke. We worked all the hours of daylight during that sunny week of our arrival, and Bluebird was ready for her first run on Friday, July 29. Then the weather broke. The wind veered to the south-west, rain fell in torrents. Our spirits sank and our tempers became edgy.

A week passed, wet, cold, miserable; and then another. Finally the wind died away, the rain ceased. I went to bed on August 9 hopeful that we could make the first run with Bluebird at four o'clock next morning.

The day dawned clear and calm. On the lake three patrol launches chugged off to check that the buoys were in position and the course was clear of driftwood. All were linked by radio to the boathouse and soon their reports would be coming in. Bluebird, her lovely sapphire skin gleaming and polished, slid comfortably into the water, fuelled and ready to be warmed up. We were all there—good old Leo Villa, and Harry Leach and Sid Randall—the old team with a new-boy driver. I was itching to be in the cockpit with Bluebird on the move.

"Let's get her warmed up, Leo," I said.

We were going to use soft plugs for the first run. These plugs will stand little heat; before a fast run once the engine was warmed, they were removed and replaced by hot plugs, which are unaffected by any amount of heat. But I was not out for speed this morning; I wanted to get the feel of Bluebird.

"O.K.," said Leo. "We've got very soft plugs in and we'll switch to intermediates when she's warmed."

I settled into the cockpit. Everything seemed snug and handy. I felt at home. I switched on the main starter valve and went through the usual drill: fuel on, throttle shut, main air cock on, switches on. The engine came easily to life with a deep-throated roar, and in a couple of minutes the thermometer was showing sixty degrees. I switched off. Leo and the team went to work changing the plugs; then Bluebird was towed well away from the shore by a launch. At last after months of planning and hard work I could look out on Coniston, ready to go.

"Good luck," said Leo. "Take it easy."

"O.K.," I grinned, and gave him the thumbs up. I touched the throttle. Bluebird surged forward. We were off.

She moved smoothly, riding easily, and I was exhilarated. The buoys ticked by. We passed the red marker at the beginning of the measured mile, the black-and-white squared marker at the half-way and finally the second red marker at the end of the mile. I eased up at the end of the lake, rounded an island on a dog-leg and was ready for the return.

I thoroughly enjoyed the run back; it was one of the biggest thrills of my life. The boat pitched a bit round about the seventy to seventy-five an hour mark, but this did not worry me. Leo was beaming when he came up in the pilot launch to tow the boat in.

"Just like the old man," he said. "A chip off the old block."

My spirits soared.

At dinner that night we heard the weather forecast for the morning was good. "Right," I said to Leo, "tomorrow I'll give her the works."

The smile faded from his face. "Now look, Don," he began, "take it easy, boy. Everything went all right today, but let's give her a little more time to settle down. You've still got a bit to learn, you know."

"To hell with it, Leo! It's a piece of cake. We'll put in the hot plugs and see what she will do."

"Don't be a fool," said Leo, banging the table. "Have another run on soft plugs."

I banged on the table, too.

"Let's get on with the job! Time's going by, we've been up here long enough. Put in hot plugs."

Leo looked at me angrily.

"All right! You'll learn. It's on your own head. . . ."

WE turned in, a little huffy, and rain was streaming down as I looked out of my bedroom window. But the dawn was bright and clear and the lake calm. We drove down to the boathouse, stumped over to Bluebird, and I clambered into the cockpit, started the engine, warmed it up.

"Hot plugs in!" said Leo a little later, without looking at me.

"O.K.," I grinned, and Bluebird was towed out.

Leo put in the primers, smiled, wished me

Slo-Mo-Shun IV, the boat in which the American Stanley Sayers set up a world water record of 178.49 miles an hour in 1952

In 1950, a cockpit was built for Leo Villa (left) during trials in Bluebird II on Lake Coniston

Right: John Cobb died in 1952 when his jet boat blew up during a record run on Loch Ness

good luck and got into the launch. I was feeling cocky.

Bluebird started without a whimper; soon the nose was down and she was skimming over the lake. Up came the first buoy.

"Here we go!" I said to myself. "No mucking about. Give her the lot."

I jammed down the foot throttle.

The engine roared angrily and Bluebird shot forward at ninety miles an hour. Suddenly the port plane dipped violently, Bluebird swerved, swung to starboard, and in a flash the thought came to me: The whole lot's going over.

I saw a launch full of press photographers ahead, took my foot off the throttle and the speed dropped and I avoided the launch. I began to sweat and feel very frightened.

Instantly I realized what had happened. By accelerating Bluebird too abruptly I had caused the engine to produce more "torque" or twist than the boat could take at that moment; instead of the engine turning the propeller round in the water it had nearly turned the boat round the propeller shaft.

You damn fool, I thought. Do what Leo tells you and take it easy.

I got Bluebird facing up the lake once more, and then accelerated very, very gently. Again at ninety miles an hour she started to snake and pitch. "Now come on," I told myself. "You've got to get her over this mark otherwise you'll be scared stiff for the rest of your life."

A little more throttle, gently; now a little more. The speed rose, the snaking stopped, and then at about 120 miles an hour Bluebird became a lady again. But I was still sweating and nervous.

Just as I was cursing myself into feeling more at home, I saw floating in the water about a hundred yards ahead a great water-logged fencing post. It seemed to be rushing at me. The launches must have missed it.

I had a jumble of thoughts: A swerve at this speed and you'll be right over. Carry straight on and hit the log and bang goes Bluebird. To hell with that! Swerve!

I swung on the wheel; Bluebird reared, slid, snaked—but the log whipped by out of harm's way. Frightened, I eased down on speed as the end of the lake came up. I swung her round and handled her most politely all the way back. Still shaken, I clambered out of the cockpit and on to the slipway and saw Leo's eyebrows rise slightly as he gave me a quizzical glance.

"Leo," I said, "this job's bloody dangerous!"

There was a roar of laughter from Leo and the team. They never let me forget that remark, and dear old Leo, to his eternal credit, never even whispered, "I told you so."

AFTER breakfast we came back again for the routine check which, among other things, meant that the 144 gross of ping-pong balls in pillow slips, stacked in the hull to provide about a ton and a half of buoyancy if the boat should be holed, all had to be removed and replaced.

The sun began to shine. Someone remarked: "We'll have a nice fine morning tomorrow." My heart sank. I was now a little too respectful of Bluebird and the terrifying power of her engine, and would cheerfully have settled for a gale until my self-confidence returned.

I drove to the lake next morning with a sinking feeling in my stomach. Bluebird was warmed up, the hot plugs were in. I got into the cockpit and was towed out. The engine started like a bomb. I worked her up gently past the awkward ninety-miles-an-hour stage, correcting her skids, holding her straight, and in the middle of the measured mile she was smooth and steady at 120. Then I told myself:

"Well, the job has got to be done, boy. Give her the gun!"

My right foot went down gently but firmly. Bluebird shot forward, the air-speed indicator slid up to 130. Then suddenly the note of the engine's roar changed.

It seemed that, just behind my head, the world was a bellow of thunder. I had been used to engine noise all my life, but never had I heard anything like this and, for a moment, it startled me.

I kept my right foot hard down and the lake became a different place. No longer were the water and the buoys and the lakeside slipping by; now everything seemed to be rushing towards me. The horizon was no longer flat, but curved. I felt that Bluebird was tearing straight towards a gigantic waterfall and in a moment would go slap over the edge. The air-speed indicator showed 135, the boat was running dead straight.

I kept the pressure on my foot. Now the speed mounted—140, 145—and I thought: That's good enough. You're over the top of the old man's speed. Ease her.

Back at the slipway we developed the film in the ciné camera which had recorded the dial readings in the cockpit. The air-speed indicator had gone well past the world record.

"No more messing about, Leo," I said. "We'll send for the official timekeepers and observers and do the job once and for all."

We fixed Saturday, August 19, for our attempt, but almost as soon as the officials arrived the weather broke. It remained foul until the Tuesday afternoon and that night the forecast was favourable.

At 7.30 a.m. the following morning I was back in Bluebird's cockpit being towed out to the head of the lake. The officials were at their

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"Colin!" they called. "Colin!" Then there was only the sound of thunder and water. No child's voice answered

All Tom Gillies's riches couldn't help him now. Only a hunch might save him—and win this woman, this woman of fire and gentleness

THE BOY FROM GLENTARKIE

by ***DAVID WALKER***

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

ANNIE KINTAIR, the Laird of Glentarkie's young daughter, and Tam Gillies, the gardener's twelve-year-old son, were bosom friends. Then Tam's father took his family to America to seek their fortune. Twenty-six years later, when Tam came on a visit to Scotland, he was T. Grant Gillies, and a rich man, a business man of power, an American.

He met Anne Kintair again. She was a widow with a young son, Colin. Her father was dead, and she had had to sell Glentarkie. She had dealt with an agent who told her that the new owners would not want the house for a year or two; would she stay on? She refused, and was due to leave within a fortnight.

Tam, married and divorced, found himself rapidly falling in love with her. He dared to hope that he might win her. But first he had something to tell her—and was worried about how to do it. Then, one evening when Colin had gone off fishing and Tam was about to reveal his secret to Anne, the phone rang.

Anne answered it—and found out who the new owner of her old home was. For the call was from America—for T. Grant Gillies, the new Laird of Glentarkie himself. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

'You're worthless to me'

HE went to the phone, and the Scottish operator asked him if he was Mr. T. Grant Gillies. He said that he was, and was told that New York City was calling him. He waited. He was ready to deal with New York City.

Hums and crackles and liquid peeps. "Conditions are something awful," he heard the operator say. "I'll try through Aberdeen."

"Is that you, Tom?" Darrell Armitage, his executive vice-president.

"What the hell do you mean by calling me here? I left explicit orders that under no circumstances——"

"I know, Tom. I'm sorry, Tom. But we've run into this darned snag with Watt and Stickney about the titanium contract. They insist on a let-out clause after five years. Came up with it today. *Insist!* They say if the government turbo orders are cut back——"

"Listen!" he broke into this weak S O S through strong static. "Watt and Stickney can't get an assured supply elsewhere, and they know it. This is business, Capital B. We're not playing parlour games."

"I know, Tom. But it isn't as simple as that."

"Principle is always simple. The contract is fair and generous to them. Tell them to take it or leave it. They'll take it. Now get this clear, Armitage. I pay you eighty thousand a year to make decisions. If you can't make decisions, you're worthless to me. Goodbye."

He hung up.

Scared of me, he thought. Scared of me and scared of decisions. Darrell was wonderful until I left him out there to stand alone. Who isn't scared of me? Young Jack Martin. Brains, yes. Flair, questionable. Better to take a new man in?

T. Grant Gillies came back from a burgeoning empire. He came back with a thump to Glentarkie House. "I was starting to tell you . . ." he began.

" 'Still the same sweet Tam,' " she quoted herself; then quoted him: " 'Now get this clear, Armitage,' " she rasped. " 'I pay you eighty thousand a year to make decisions. If you can't make decisions you're worthless to me.' "

God, he thought, do I sound like that?

The thunder rumbled. He said nothing. He watched her face.

"How dare you patronize us! How dare you come back, Tam,Tam, the bogus bulldozer man, the barefooted Highland boy who made good!

"How gratifying to turn the tables round! Stay on a year or two, please do, to put the place in order for me. So generous, such an inhuman philanthropist! How dare you gloat over us with your little secret, so kind, so gentle, so understanding! What have I done to deserve that?"

"Nothing," he said. But his own temper rose. "Nothing, within the limits of the convention—the laird's daughter steps down from her snob's world to the world of the gardener's son."

"Oh," she said, "how could you think that?"

"I'm sorry," he said. "I don't." It was only a defensive thought that lurked. "I wanted you to have Glentarkie. I didn't want it for myself."

"Charity," she said, "tycoon genre! Good intentions, too, I have no doubt. No, thank you very much.

" 'Lock, stock and barrel, except what I want.' You paid a big fat price, you shall have it all, including your own Glentarkie whisky, and the picture I painted to take away. But that's yours already. That's *my* mite of philanthropy. Here, take it now!"

She thrust the canvas at him. "Possession in two weeks was what I said. That's what you'll get."

He stared at her. She was wild and beautiful in anger. His own anger drummed in his head. "You little fool!" he said. "I don't want possession of Glentarkie.It's you I want possession of."

He dropped her picture. He walked through the hall, trod on his own rugs, he supposed, passed his Canaletto, and out of the front door.

"How dare you patronize us!" she cried, wild and beautiful in her anger. His own temper rose . . .

THE sun was not shining on Ben Rum. The indigo clouds were now dull mustard, mounting the sky from the south and the west. Thunder grumbled without a pause.

He got into the car and drove down the avenue and through the gates. The lodge was empty. It had been the forester's house, her last employee, she had told him, doing general work in recent years. But he had five children; she could not afford to pay him more; what else could he do but leave?

Government, he thought. You can't even chop a goddam tree without forms in quintuplicate. Well, I'll show them. I'll drain the hill; I'll

double the number of black-faced sheep. I'll . . . yes, by God, I will. And if it isn't one thing, it's the other. If it isn't Socialist this and that, it's the class system still going strong. Watch out for the gardener's son, Glentarkie!

He was very angry. He had acted from good intentions, he truly believed. But I wonder, he thought—for his own beginnings lay in this glen, and who can escape the mould of beginnings?—I wonder if landed privilege and responsibility aren't the real strength of this country?

Too little wealth put back in the land? Might that not be a weakness of ours? Principle is always simple, I told that weakling Armitage. One of my dictums. What a pontifical swine I am becoming, or have become! Sure, principle is simple if you know the principle involved. But what makes for a sound and stable society? —not quite so easy.

He had these vexatious thoughts while waiting a short time, a minute or two, at the main road. He looked across the river, and up the Rum Burn, which was its insignificant tributary. There was no high cover beside the burn, only bracken, the green fern parasite, swallowing what had been good pasture land. He could get rid of that, too, at a price.

He looked carefully all the way up to the first crest and the old stone wall. He saw no sign of Colin. He had watched young Colin climb there before to do it the pleasant way—start at the loch and fish down home.

I could do with a boy like that, he thought. Might help to keep me human. Then it occurred to him that even his thoughts about the boy involved the gratification of T. Grant Gillies. I don't know what the hell's got into me, he thought. When have I ever questioned myself?

But he knew well what had got into him—an angry and good and beautiful woman.

There was a peculiar lividness in the light, the tinge of a fading bruise; but the storm held off. Colin would make it down all right.

He drove a quarter of a mile or so to the west, to the place where the hill road branched left across the Tarkie by the Roman Bridge and climbed to Loch Rum, and on to the next glen to the south. He saw Colin's bicycle at the bridge.

It was after seven.

He came on the minister round a bend. The minister wore his clerical suit, trouser clips and flat black hat with a safety cord. He pedalled at an immemorial eight miles an hour. Tom Gillies passed him and stopped ahead.

"Oh, it's you again, Tam," the minister said. He was old now, gaunt-faced and white of hair. They had met and talked together casually that morning.

"What about stowing your bike in the trunk, and riding along with me?" He had wanted nothing less than company; an exception might be the company of this tranquil man.

"That's a fine idea," the minister said. "We're in for a wicked storm, I'm thinking, and here's me with nothing better than my canonicals. Total immersion, what about that for a Presbyterian? Tut-tut now, no blasphemy, George Tocher!" he mumbled and bumbled on to himself.

Tom Gillies smiled, stowing the bicycle. He had forgotten that habit of spoken thoughts, but, like everything else, like almost everything else, it was familiar to him again. Mr. Tocher was a Christian man, the frankness of whose Christian thoughts had disconcerted generations of strangers to Glentarkie.

"The light is queer," he said, driving again. "A bad storm, you think?"

"I do," said the minister. "The thunderstorms mostly pass us by. They follow the hills on either side. But once in a while, just once in five or six summers, mebbe, we get a convergence of them, like a—what? Like an aerial maelstrom, you understand. The south, the west. Look at the north now, too. Oh, the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon us," he said cheerfully. "Bingo! Like I was reading in some Yankee book."

His feet did not slip and Tom had the boy out in a couple of minutes, carrying him carefully to safety

Tom Gillies laughed in spite of himself.

"I was thinking," continued the minister. "I was just cogitating to myself after we met this forenoon: here's Tam Gillies with a wee small car and a quiet suit and no fancy frills about him.

"Now I says to myself: That's fine, but it isn't all about Tam Gillies. There's an unmistakable air he has, that men only get in special ways: 'I say unto one, Go, and he goeth.' Was I right in my notion, Tam? Is it a great success that you've made in life?"

Some said that the minister's failing was inquisitiveness, Tom Gillies now remembered; others that he was simply interested in his fellow men. Tam's own parents used to disagree about it.

There was no secret now worth keeping. There was no secret now at all. "I guess your hunch was right," he said, "if you mean hard cash."

Some of the cash was hard enough, he thought. But I've stuck to my rules. I've never been in on a shady deal. Rigged the market? Why, certainly not! . . . Titanium prices? Oh, go to hell, he told himself.

"For all the worth that money really has for me," he heard himself pontificating.

"It's a bothersome burden, wealth, I'm thinking," the old minister said beside him. Twilight had come two hours early. "Yet how fortunate the rich man is."

"You mean in the creature comforts?"

"No, Tam. I mean in the Christian battle."

"That's a pretty hard doctrine," Tom Gillies said. He put on the sidelights. "Give it all away, and what is it then but a drop in a bucket?"

"Ah!" said the minister with delight. He loved disputation. "Utterly fallacious, as our Lord would agree, I fancy, nowadays. *Not* to give it all away, there's the true challenge and the rub, dear laddie.

"My goodness, the lightning never stops. We're in for a furious plout. How hard for them that trust in riches, Mark said. Mark is the gospel, you know. The others are copycats. You seem troubled in your spirit, Tam."

"I am," he said.

He had too much besides wealth to carry alone. What better person than the Reverend George Tocher?

So he told him about Glentarkie and about Anne Kintair.

"I thought she'd be sure to accept the free rental offer. I thought anybody would. I owe all my beginnings to this place, and it seemed to me that here was a way of paying my debt, and I planned after a year or two of spending enough to put Glentarkie in first-rate shape, I planned to hand back the deeds . . ."

"Anonymously, Tam?"

"I wouldn't be dead sure about that," he said. "Well, then, she said no to the agents, she would leave at once, which put me on a spot. So I decided to come up myself, not letting on, and see if I couldn't persuade her to stay, as an old friend. We were great friends once. Do you remember?"

"Och, I remember fine," said the minister. "The Laird and I often talked about it, what good wee pals you were."

"Yesterday I arrived." Could it be only yesterday? "But another totally unexpected kind of complication hit me in the face. . . . Never thought of it. Never had occurred to me. How stupid can I be?"

"It's a stupidity that hit a good many other chaps these last seven years," the minister said. "And all sent packing coolly and kindly. But she lost her good man, and that was that, and she lived for the boy, and she had herself in

an iron grip, never a tear nor a complaint, never a sign of that old temper; do you remember it, Tam?"

"Remember it? I had a hurricane blast half an hour ago."

The minister sat back in the flickering gloom, coming now to the gates of the manse. He was still laughing when Tom Gillies stopped outside the door.

"What's the joke about?" he inquired irritably. A much brighter flash, wait . . . wait . . . wait; a first loud peal, crash, dwindle, fade into the background thunder.

The minister did not answer. "Now there's a vexatious thing," he was muttering to himself. "The Lord wouldn't want earthly love to be unselfish, now would he? Because if the Lord wanted earthly love to be unselfish, the Lord would get a poor, unloved type of bairn. Careful now, George Tocher, no vulgarity! Tam, my son," he said, "does the Lord walk with you in your doings?"

"No," he said. "I guess the Lord does not."

"Mebbe I'll see you in kirk the morn," said the minister, "to hear the same old gasbag. And here's me with my sermon not done yet. Every Sabbath I say to myself, eighteen minutes it's going to be. And every Sabbath, I'm just into my stride about twenty-five. But a man needs the Lord to guide him in his doings. Will you come in now for a bite of supper?"

"No, thank you," he said. "Young Colin went up to fish the burn. He should be home by now, but, I don't know why, I feel uneasy in my mind about him. I think I'll just run along to see if his bike is still at the bridge."

Or to pay a call on Colin's mother? he asked himself. *Decidedly not!*

The minister stood on the steps of the manse like a prophet of old in lightning and thunder. "God bless you, then, Tam," he said. "Walk humbly."

Tom Gillies went. The flashes rippled, well, not quite rippled—more like the flutter of a poor-risk heart, jig-jog, jig-jog, irregular surge and slack. His eyes were on the road ahead, but the flash, the violet fork of lightning high up there to the right marked its image on his eyes.

It seemed black dark now in the contrast between flashes. The rain smell was here, and the rain had not come. An owl flew across his path, the featherlight owl, gone into trees, owl in a hurry, owl confused.

The storm must have broken up there on the hill; he had no reason to think that Colin was not down. Reason said: *Of course he got down in time.* But reason was not the thing. Unreason was what drove him faster, at almost forty miles an hour, the best he could do on this tortuous road.

Now a new flash. He did not see it directly. It lit the world with a wicked light. It shook the world two seconds later. The rain arrived solidly, coldly. The windshield wipers did not wipe their semi-circles clear.

He slowed. He saw the four tall larches and the river. I wish I had passed you larches by, he thought. You tamaracks or hackmatacks or larches. *Walk humbly,* the minister said. Here I walk with humility and with a feeling that the next stroke is due.

His feeling was right. The hiss, the bolt, the crash arrived as he passed the first of the four larches, tallest in Scotland by repute. Four great larches stand over me. Lightning strikes one; then there are three.

He got out of there with his foot flat down, skidded, corrected, and he heard a falling larch contribute to the pandemonium. Which one, he wondered?

And then he wondered about something else, because his mind, *that coldly logical machine,* assessment of friends and enemies alike, his excellent mind was running around a bit—he wondered why that endearing, annoying old

Continued on page 45

A brilliant novel of the West Indies by

ALEC WAUGH

Alec Waugh

SINCE his first novel was published when he was nineteen, Alec Waugh has gained an international reputation. He has travelled extensively for thirty years and lived in many parts of the world. One of his special loves has been the West Indies: and now, from his knowledge of these exotic islands, comes a brilliant new novel...

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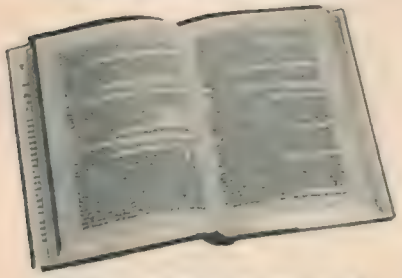

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Tycoon in Toytown

by JOHN HARMAN

Lew Davis is a modern Pied Piper. All over the world, children love the miniature music of his toys. . . . And he calls the tune for his rivals

Above: Girls test toy instruments. Moulded plastic reeds help Davis to cut his prices. Right: Trombone duet by bandleader Ted Heath (left) and Davis, who used to be a musician

THE gamble taken by a plump, bustling toymaker named Lew Davis appealed to his sporting instinct, but worry gave him sleepless nights. He had invented a new type of musical box, shaped like a small drum, which could be moulded almost entirely in plastic. The moulds, though, had cost him £5,000, and before he could make a profit he had to sell a quarter of a million boxes.

Such a target was unheard of in his trade. It was more than double the number which Switzerland, a country famed for that type of toy, sends to Britain in a year.

But when he showed his invention at the Harrogate Toy Fair of 1949, in a cramped, third-floor room which befitted his status as a minor manufacturer, buyers queued to listen to the nursery rhymes and place orders. His salesmen, struggling in the crowd, did £80,000-worth of business.

By the end of the year, half a million boxes at 3s. 6d. each had appeared in shops in this country, Australia and most parts of the world. "I was particularly pleased with one order for fifty thousand," he says. "It came from Switzerland."

Davis, who was once a trombonist and played for Jack Hylton, Ambrose and other famous bandleaders, regards his musical box as the turning point in his manufacturing career. Since then, his business has expanded at a speed which has probably never been equalled before.

He has concentrated on toys made of plastic—a material which is revolutionizing the trade. It is now used for one-sixth of the £30 million worth of toys made in Britain every year. Like many of the country's five hundred toymakers, he finds it so cheap that he can beat competition even from metal and wooden toys made in Germany, where labour costs are lower.

This talent for undercutting rivals' prices, sometimes by as much as a half or two-thirds, has helped his firm to grow from a single workroom in a London sidestreet into a large organization with a modern factory at Braintree, Essex, five hundred employees and a turnover of nearly £1,000,000 annually.

Today, he is one of the biggest manufacturers

Left: Moulding machines cut production costs. Plastics have revolutionized toys

Above: The end of the production line for toy guitars. They contain musical boxes

of plastic toys in Europe. Aged fifty-two, he has greying hair and gold-rimmed spectacles; his scrubbed, immaculate look of a typical company chairman is combined with an air of permanent surprise at his change of fortune.

So far, he has made a hundred million toys. They range from boats, walking dogs and false moustaches to "talking" Easter eggs, pigs and ducks which have cardboard gramophone records inside them. Model soldiers are still popular, but the trend in the trade is away from warlike subjects.

"My constant problem is to find new toys for girls," he says. "Boys like almost everything—fishing rods, conjuring sets or telescopes—but with girls, it is hard to get beyond dolls and knitting sets."

This year, his bid for feminine approval is a miniature dressing table, complete with mirrors, perfume and cosmetics. He hopes to please both sexes with the musical toys which, as might be expected from a former musician, are his speciality.

He has just made his ten millionth mouth organ—"Germany used to have the whip-hand in that market"—and passed the six million mark with flutes, a one-shilling line especially favoured by Africans.

SHOPS have found that while cheap toys sell indefinitely, expensive ones have a selling life of about two years. In order to replace toys which are declining in popularity, Davis introduces twenty-five lines a year—and breaks a cherished tradition of the trade. "Christmas toys are usually shown in January, and summer lines have a definite season in the spring," says Dick Sadleir, his advertising manager. "Davis launches toys as soon as his moulds are ready."

Not all of them succeed, however. A type of whistle for which he had great hopes failed to attract much attention, and some model birds perched in his showroom forlornly for months without buyers. "I do well if I have one success to two failures," says Davis. "Since it is impossible to forecast whether a toy will sell, I rely on my own instinct and ignore advice."

After inventing a plastic ukelele and being warned that the retail price of one guinea was far too high, he gave it a special launching. He showed that the nylon strings were waterproof by employing a girl in hula-hula costume to pick the instruments out of a huge goldfish tank, play them and give them to bystanders. Now, he has made 355,000 ukeleles. Among his clients are islanders of Tonga and Hawaii in the Pacific.

He invariably does his designs with a ball-pen on scraps of paper. Cecil Lobb, his development engineer, was intrigued to receive a menu card from Nice. "On the back of it was a microscope which he had drawn during a holiday lunch," says Lobb. "As usual, he had not troubled to insert the measurements. I made a model by putting my ruler on the sketch."

Davis keeps tools in his desk for working on prototypes of wood, cardboard and fibreboard. The alterations which he constantly makes, often to the despair of his staff, have proved worthwhile.

The musical box which he showed at Harrogate, for example, consisted of a plastic drum which revolved when a handle was turned. Pips inside it plucked out a melody on the teeth of a metal comb. When he realized that he would get a mellower sound if the pips were moulded in rubber, the result was a box which has reached a production figure of five million.

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Davis takes a look at the mechanism of a musical box which plays current hits. His grandchildren try new toys

THE difficulty has been in selecting tunes to satisfy a world market. Although there are thirty of them, ranging from "Happy Birthday"—"which is the international best-seller"—to "Turkey In The Straw," a Bangkok trader was annoyed at the firm's inability to send the latest Siamese compositions.

Davis claims that where wind instruments are concerned, the secret of his price-cutting is a means of moulding reed plates out of plastic. They cost a farthing each. The Germans charge ninepence for hand-made plates.

At Braintree, he has twelve injection moulding machines, three of them entirely automatic, which turn out reed plates and toys at a rate of sixteen or more a minute. A shiny gold finish—it tempted the Duke of Gloucester's sons to try Davis's trumpets at the British Industries Fair—is obtained by an explosion. An electric spark in a vacuum chamber atomizes metal and coats it over the instruments.

Davis insists on his salesmen being able to play his toys. "Middle-aged men," says Bertram Collings, his sales manager, "have not liked being sent home to learn the flute."

Born in Soho, the son of a fruiterer, Davis learned to play an instrument at fifteen. He bought a trombone for 35s. and got a professional date in a West End dance hall. Eight years later, when working for Jack Hylton, he produced his first invention—a type of mute which fitted, cup-like, over the bell of a trumpet and softened the loudest note into a whisper.

"I made it on the kitchen table with a sheet of tin, a pair of snips, a soldering iron and three pieces of cork," he says. "Unfortunately, I forgot to patent it. Almost every trumpeter uses one nowadays."

In 1936, he had to take a big decision. He

Left: Girls are not so easy to please as boys. Davis's answer is a make-up set that has mirrors, sprays and perfume bottles

received a cable from America, inviting him to join a band which was being formed for the Rainbow Room, a fashionable restaurant in New York. Davis turned down the offer. "I often wonder what might have happened," he says. "Glenn Miller took my chair."

As a featured soloist on the trombone, Davis was called the Tommy Dorsey of Britain and earned up to £80 a week, but the life separated him from his wife and daughter and proved to be too exhausting. Once, on tour with Hylton, he played in eight different countries in seven days. He opened a shop for musical instruments in Charing-Cross Road and, after studying books on lathe-operating, started a factory for making mutes and mouthpieces.

His introduction to mass-production in plastics came after the war, entirely by chance. He bought a five-cent tea strainer in Chicago and decided to make strainers in Britain. Feeling adventurous, he paid £480 for a mould, and was astonished when a well-known chain of stores sent in an order for 70,000 strainers a week.

A month later, a buyer for the same chain noticed a model for a plastic clarinet which was lying on Davis's desk.

Davis, who maintains that he is a manufacturer and not a salesman—"He is proud of never having asked for an order," says one executive—persuaded his brother Ben to go to the chain's head office and give a demonstration.

Ben Davis was half-way through "The Parade Of The Tin Soldiers" when the chairman walked in and spoke of needing 175,000 clarinets in six months. "Then I began to see the possibilities in plastic toys," says Lew Davis. "In all, I made a quarter of a million clarinets at three and sixpence each."

He plans to bring out soon a small plastic piano; a device which plays a gramophone record and costs about 4s., and a plastic recorder selling for about 5s., which is nearly half the price of imported wooden recorders. He believes that in time his mass-produced instruments—"I always aim to make a million of each toy"—might help to develop the musical talents of British children. At present, he and other manufacturers find that children in this country prefer toys such as musical boxes, which are easy to play.

When Davis evolves a new line, he tries it on his grandchildren. He also encourages his staff to seek first-hand reactions from the younger generation, but the experiments are not always fully appreciated.

Collings visited some friends one evening and took a trumpet for their small son. The boy was delighted with the gift. He refused to go to bed and blew the instrument energetically for most of the night and every day for a week.

"The parents' nerves were in shreds, the dog barked continually and neighbours started to complain," says Collings. "When next I called, my welcome was decidedly cool." THE END

Below: Engineer Cecil Lobb watches Davis test a new plastic piano. The firm aims to make a million of each new instrument

Midnight on the Lagoon

by ***VICTOR CANNING***

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

A woman so beautiful had rules of her own. "For love we do desperate things," she said. Things like murder!

BARTEO MONDONI was lying flat on the cushions in the stern of the motor launch. His hands folded behind his head, he was staring straight up into the sun-burnished sky. A few pigeons from the Piazza San Marco flew across the patch of blue. The air was full of the chatter of people moving up and down the waterfront, the cries of hawkers and the shouts of gondoliers touting for customers.

Humming a little tune to himself, Barteo was inwardly cursing Venice, the people in it and his own bad luck. Somehow within the next ten days he had to find a hundred thousand lire. If he had any sense, he told himself, he would find it in the same way as he had long ago found enough money to make the step from gondolier to motor-launch proprietor.

A *vaporetto* went by, and the wash from its wake set his launch rocking. As the boat heaved, the sky was replaced by buildings, part of the front of the Danieli Hotel, the winged lion from the tall column in the *piazzetta* and the striped awning of a café.

Two tourists looked down into the boat and Barteo closed his eyes, pretending to be asleep. He was hired for the afternoon anyway, as he had been for every afternoon that week. He lay there, a plump man of forty in a blue shirt and white trousers, his square, browned face topped with black, grease-shining curls. In that moment he decided to do it, but to say nothing to Maria. If she knew she'd tear his eyes out.

The chief reason why he was so behindhand with his instalments on the launch was because of his wife, Maria. For six months she had been ill and Barteo had spent far more on doctors for her than he could afford. And without hesitation—for, whatever else Barteo might be, he was a loving husband.

"Barteo!" It was a woman's voice from the quay.

Barteo slid off his seat quickly and stood up. A great smile cracked his face and his strong, white teeth flashed. *Mamma mia*, what a sight she was! What a beautiful sight! She stood there in a white silk dress, a red belt about the middle and a touch of red scarf at her throat, and the wind from the water took the lovely sweep of her fair hair and gave it life.

Whoever Signor Lamonte was, thought Barteo, he was a lucky man to have such a wife—and rich. The rings on her fingers would have paid off the debt on Barteo's launch and kept him and his wife, Maria, in luxury for years.

"Signora Lamonte," he called out cheerfully to the woman. "*Ben venuto*. . . ." He reached up and helped her into the launch as though she were a princess.

"Barteo," she greeted him. "Always laughing, always gay! This afternoon I have brought a friend and you must sing some of my favourite songs for him."

As she stepped by him, Barteo saw that a man was standing on the quay waiting to come aboard. Barteo gave the man a little bow and then helped him in.

At once he disliked him. Each afternoon for over a week he had taken Signora Lamonte out, and he had no wish to share her with another man. Her high spirits, her light chatter and her insistence on his singing the Venetian songs he loved had made welcome periods of calm in his troubles.

This man, he knew at once, wasn't her husband. She had shown him a photograph of her husband, a large, bulky shouldered man, and well into his fifties. "He goes bald, Barteo," she had said, laughing. "That is because he works so hard to make money for me to spend. . . ."

No, this man wasn't her husband. He was young and expensive-looking, the kind Barteo saw around the bars, with wide shoulders that fell away to slim hips, and a dark, hard-cut face with large, cold eyes.

Barteo's afternoon was spoiled. He took them out into the shallow lagoons towards Burano. Venice fell back on the skyline in a delicate frieze of towers and domes that danced above the sun-spangle on the waters.

HE drove fast because Signora Lamonte insisted on it. She was exhilarated by the wind and the smash of spray curving up in two great wings from the bows. He sang for them, but his heart wasn't in it, for he could see the two of them sitting in the stern of the boat.

As far as they were concerned, he might not have been there. The man had his arm around Signora Lamonte's waist and they talked together in low voices. Once they kissed. But for how long Barteo could not tell, for he tipped his mirror at an angle to avoid seeing them.

Usually the sight of lovers sitting behind him gave Barteo a warm, indulgent feeling. A woman's waist was made for a man's arm, and her lips for a man's kiss. For all his faults, Barteo was a simple, sincere man, and the sight of other people's happiness gave him pleasure.

But not this afternoon. Giasone—for he had heard her call him that—could have dropped dead and he would have been unmoved. He had come to like

Here was Giasone's chance. He threw himself against the older man. There was a shout, a moment of struggle . . .

DAWN SHOOT

This was the day! Jeremy was being taken shooting by his father for the first time. And he hated it. . . . ARTHUR GORDON's moving story of a boy who chose to accept failure and risk winning contempt from the man he loved

THE WINGS OF DEATH

A donkey with wings—that was the symbol with which Henri Larne signed his paintings. Surely there could be nothing sinister in that. . . . An intriguing new story by CHRISTOPHER BUSH of murder in the Parisian world of art

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

Signora Lamonte very much, and if she were tired of her husband, that was all right. A woman so beautiful couldn't be bound by ordinary rules.

But he disliked Giasone. There was something about the man that filled him with antipathy. He decided that if he had to go back to his old pickpocket ways of finding money he would start with Giasone.

And he did. Two hours later, as he helped the pair out of the launch at San Marco, he expertly picked Giasone's wallet from the man's inside pocket. He watched them go off, arm in arm. Then, squatting down by the engine, he opened the wallet; a few letters, a driving licence and fifty thousand lire.

IT was a lucky first haul. In a week, if such luck held, he would have his hundred thousand lire. Giasone wouldn't miss his wallet for some time. By then anyone might have taken it. All Barteo had to do was to empty it and throw it overboard on his way home.

He began to straighten up. As he did so someone jumped into the launch behind him. He turned quickly to find himself facing Giasone. On the quay was Signora Lamonte.

Giasone just stared at him with his hard, still eyes. Then he reached back and took Signora Lamonte's hand and helped her in.

"Start up and go out," said Giasone curtly.

Barteo looked at Signora Lamonte. She was beautiful and poised, but for the first time he saw a hint of ruthlessness about her mouth.

"Do as he says, Barteo." There was no warmth in her voice.

"Signora, please. . . ."

"Start up," Giasone broke into his appeal. At the same time he kicked Barteo expertly with his thin, pointed shoe just above the ankle.

Barteo took them out and down towards the Lido and then, at a sign from Giasone, he shut off the engine. The boat drifted idly.

Giasone broke the silence. "You were unlucky, Barteo. A few moments after we left you I wanted to show Signora Lamonte a letter from my wallet. *Very* unlucky."

Barteo took the wallet from his pocket. "Here it is, signore. I ask your forgiveness."

Giasone shook his head. "Keep it. You can tell your story to the police."

"The police? But, signore, is it necessary?" Barteo turned towards Signora Lamonte. "Signora, cannot the whole thing be forgotten?"

"Why should it be?"

Fear stirred in Barteo. "But you do not understand, signora. Years ago when I was a gondolier I served several sentences for theft. If you take me to the police now I shall get the maximum sentence . . . and I have been straight for years and years.

"It will kill my wife. You understand—she has not been well. I have had to spend money on doctors for her, and so the instalments on this boat have fallen behind. Otherwise I should not have done this. Oh, signora, please understand. . . . I had to find the money by the end of the month."

Giasone smiled, but there was no pity in the cold bleak eyes. Neither he nor the woman said anything for a while. Barteo looked at Signora Lamonte; she was turning the wedding ring on her finger absently, her head lowered. Suddenly her head came up and her eyes were on him.

"You stole from my friend, Barteo. It is hard to forgive that."

"Signora . . . I was desperate."

"And I have been good to you, too," she went on. "I have paid you more than well for your services."

"Signora. . . ." Barteo's shoulders drooped, and he avoided her eyes in his shame.

"You need money so badly?" she asked.

"Without it I lose my boat. My wife is still not well . . . there are doctors' bills. When a man is desperate, signora, what is there he will not do to preserve the things he loves?"

"You love your wife?"

"Of course, signora."

She nodded, full of understanding, and hope began to grow in Barteo.

GIASONE looked at Signora Lamonte. She turned to Barteo. "Barteo," she said gently. and there was a smile on her face now. "How much money do you need to pay off your debt?"

"A hundred thousand lire, signora." Barteo mopped his face with his handkerchief.

"We could show you a way of earning that, a way out of your troubles, Barteo—if you would help us. We could forget all about the police."

"Signora, I will do anything," said Barteo eagerly.

Giasone chuckled, and the sound was like pebbles being washed together by the sea. "It is a little thing, Barteo. But do not try to make fools of us. I have a quick temper. On a dark night a man might find himself in a canal." His hand partly slipped from his pocket and Barteo saw the ugly black bulk of an automatic.

"Yes, Barteo, a very little thing we ask—in order to keep you from the police and to earn you your hundred thousand lire."

"What is it?" asked Barteo.

"Tomorrow Signora Lamonte's husband arrives in Venice. You are a man of the world: you will understand that Signora Lamonte is no longer interested in her husband, only in his money. It would be convenient if he had an accident. Then I could marry the signora, and we should be so happy. You, too, Barteo. We should all be happy." He reached out and took Signora Lamonte's hand, caressing it.

"You love your wife, Barteo," said Signora Lamonte softly, "and I also love Giasone. Sometimes for love we do desperate things. You understand that. We can help you, Barteo—if you help us."

"Otherwise . . ." said Giasone, and he raised Signora Lamonte's hand and kissed it. But his eyes on Barteo were cold.

Barteo knew they were in earnest. They would turn him over to the police as ruthlessly as they planned murder.

"Tomorrow evening," went on Giasone, "you will take the three of us out to Torcello. Signor Lamonte wants us to dine at the Locanda Ristorante.

"On the way back you will stop and sing us some songs. Then, unfortunately, Signor Lamonte—who will have had too much to drink—will fall overboard. Although we go round and round looking for him he is not picked up. Alas, he cannot swim. . . . So simple, so natural."

"But, I can't. That would be——"

"An accident!" said Giasone.

"I won't do it," Barteo shouted.

"So? Then let us go to the police now. *Avanti!*" He jerked his head towards the shore.

BARTEO didn't move. He was in their hands and he knew it. He felt sick and empty inside; a plump, brown-faced, simple man caught in the net of his own wrongdoing. He sat there for a long while and they waited, and in the end he said almost inaudibly, "Very well. I will do it."

"You are sensible, Barteo," said Signora Lamonte. "Do not worry. It is a simple thing—and happiness for all of us at the end. It is good that people should be happy. . . ."

A simple thing! That night Barteo lay in bed by his sleeping wife and tried to find a way out. But he could see none.

If he knew where Signor Lamonte lived or where he would be staying in Venice, he could tell him the whole story. The man might well pay him the hundred thousand lire he needed for the warning and use his influence with the police to squash any charge of picking pockets. But he had no way of finding Signor Lamonte.

And if he went to the police—who had no love for him anyway—Giasone would deny everything, and he would never get the money he wanted, his boat would be lost . . . and later the blow would come from the darkness.

Once his wife woke. Her hand found his beneath the covers.

"You don't sleep, *caro*?"

"It is so hot."

"You are worrying again? About the money for the boat and the doctors?"

"I shall find it."

"How, *caro*?" Then with a quick note of anxiety in her voice she said, "Not by. . . ."

"No, Maria. That is all finished. Maybe, perhaps I can borrow it."

"From whom? The rich woman who has been hiring your boat?"

Staring grimly into the darkness, Barteo said: "Maybe. . . . Now go to sleep."

He spent the next day in misery, sitting in his boat well out in the lagoon, searching for a solution. There was no song in him today, and

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A grave young 'cellist was bundled into a conductor's frock coat and sent out to face a jeering audience of Brazilian opera-goers. Arturo Toscanini, son of an Italian peasant, was on his way to becoming the world's greatest conductor. . . . Since that night in Rio de Janeiro nearly seventy years ago, he has become one of the outstanding personalities of the age. In spite of his stormy rehearsals, his unpredictable behaviour in public, he has surrounded himself with friends. One of the closest of these begins an intimate pen-portrait of a genius . . .

Toscanini

by SAMUEL CHOTZINOFF

The Maestro was a fearsome legend—and I invited him home to dinner. "Why not?" he said. Our lives were never the same again

THE first time I met Arturo Toscanini was in the spring of 1926. I was then music critic for the New York *World*, and I had been sent to Europe to report on musical events. In Paris one day, I received a cable from my editor telling me to go to Milan to investigate reported trouble between Toscanini and the Fascists. Rumours had reached New York that Toscanini had refused to open his performances at La Scala with the Fascist hymn and had severed his connection with the Milan opera house.

Knowing Toscanini's distaste for journalists, I took the precaution of obtaining a letter of introduction from a friend of his in New York. This letter, wrapped in a hundred-lire note, I presented to the concierge at Via Durini 20, the Maestro's seventeenth-century house in the heart of Milan. I was shown into a music-room furnished in Victorian style, hung with many Victorian paintings in elaborate gilt frames and adorned further with bronze figures of Verdi, Puccini and Catalani; in black boxes, under glass, were plaster death masks of Beethoven and Verdi.

The Maestro came in after a few minutes, shook my hand warmly and motioned me to a chair. He was smartly dressed. Though the day was hot, he wore a waistcoat, a starched shirt and wing collar; starched cuffs protruded from the sleeves of his black morning coat. His trousers were striped and his small shoes were newly shined. His sparse, soft, white hair was brushed up at the sides, giving him the look of a satyr. His pepper-and-salt moustache was neatly trimmed, with both ends sticking up in points. His face was richly suntanned and, although he was almost sixty, there was not a wrinkle on it.

Fearing that I might never again have a chance to see him at such close range, I boldly scanned his face and figure. I was struck by the classic mould of his head, the beauty of his face, the dark

Rehearsals were usually grim battles between the orchestra and Toscanini. Sometimes he would blame himself. "I am the *stupido*"

During a concert tour, Toscanini takes a ride in a ski lift, and (below) leads his orchestra in a "barbecue opera"

Author Samuel Chotzinoff talks to Toscanini and his late wife, Carla. Below: The Maestro poses with Mrs. Chotzinoff (left) and her sister

Toscanini's son photographed him with a special camera designed to develop film on the spot. The Maestro gravely took out his watch to time the operation

intensity of his eyes; his look was so piercing that his eyes seemed to shoot out actual rays. I knew that I was in the presence of a great man.

I told him frankly the purpose of my visit. He replied with a stream of Italian which I could not understand. I began again, speaking slowly and in a kind of pidgin English that I hoped he would be able to grasp. I said that I did not wish to pry into his affairs, but that his resistance to Fascism was of great concern to the world. My paper would like to have the privilege of presenting his side of the story. As I spoke, I felt from the perplexed expression on his face that he did not understand a word.

When I finished, he stared intently at me for a while, and then looked away with the helpless air of a man who had tried his best to comprehend and could do no more. "I see," I said sadly, "you don't understand English." He nodded. Defeated, I rose to go. We shook hands.

He saw me out politely, and as I descended the stairs, he called out: "See Smeeze." I stopped and turned around, expecting him to say more. But no elucidation followed. "See Smeeze, see Smeeze," he reiterated, and I walked down the Via Durini repeating the cryptic words in an effort to arrive at their meaning.

Near La Scala I ran into Max Smith, the music critic of the New York *American*. Max was the only journalist Toscanini could tolerate, and Max in turn was extremely devoted to Toscanini. He followed the Maestro wherever he went and kept voluminous notes on his performances, even to the metronomic timings of every piece of music that he played. I was, therefore, not at all surprised to find Max in Milan.

Max spoke Italian well. I told him about my visit to the Via Durini and asked if he could make anything out of the Maestro's advice or admonition or whatever the strange words implied. Max laughed and said it was plain enough: "'See Smeeze' meant 'See Smith.' He was merely referring you to me for information about the La Scala situation."

"But doesn't Toscanini speak any English?" I asked. "After all, he spent seven winters in New York, from 1908 to 1915." Max blushed and changed the subject to the Maestro's present difficulties with the Milan Fascists. It then dawned on me that I had been the victim of the Maestro's extraordinary histrionic powers. Unwilling to discuss his troubles with me, he pretended that he could neither speak nor understand English. He had carried out his play with the finesse of a great actor. And to dramatize his ignorance of the language and at the same time to show his willingness to be helpful, he had cannily referred me to his diplomatic acolyte.

That winter Toscanini was back in New York conducting the Philharmonic Symphony. I went to see him in the green room of Carnegie Hall after his first concert. I was amused to hear him speak beautiful, if archaic, English. And when I asked why he had misled me in Milan, he replied that he had never in his life given an interview to a journalist and never would. Then, with a mischievous twinkle, he added: "But you believed me, absolutely, no?" I told him that he was a wonderful actor and that he had me fooled absolutely. He looked very pleased.

I haunted the green room of Carnegie Hall after every Toscanini concert. For Toscanini had cast his spell over me, as he did over everyone who had access to him.

Yet seeing him at close range did nothing to explain the mystery of his power. He did not, in fact, *exercise* power. He *radiated* it, effortlessly, unconsciously, like some absolute monarch of a long, unbroken, unopposed line of absolute monarchs. Nor could familiarity with him reveal the secret of his personal fascination. There was no one in any way like him, no one to whom I could compare him.

He was—and is—a law unto himself. I have never heard anyone seriously oppose him to his face on any subject whatsoever. One could disagree only silently, for open opposition invited the most unpleasant of penalties—ostracism. To be shut out from that most exciting, that most exhilarating personality was a dismaying deprivation.

Of course, no one would dare question his musical judgments. His knowledge of music was encyclopaedic, his opinions solidly founded and therefore irrefutable. But his talk on music was not academic. He did not regard music as an end in itself. It was for him a humane art, valid only when it expressed the heart or soul of man.

His peasant intuition and levelheadedness steered him clear of the lofty tomfoolery that makes some excellent musicians forget the primary objective of music—namely, the expression of emotion through song. The admonition *"canta"* (sing) was always on his lips. *"Canta!"* he for ever implored or shouted at orchestras and at singers, and he hunted the melody in a composition relentlessly, like a hunter stalking his prey.

In the late twenties, when he was the musical director of the New York Philharmonic Symphony, Toscanini lived in a modest suite at the Astor Hotel. A large advertising sign twinkled perpetually outside his living-room window. It did not disturb him in the least. On the contrary, he liked to watch it. He also enjoyed the crowds and the bustle in the lobbies of the hotel and the din of the surrounding Times Square area.

In a narrow brownstone house connecting with the hotel lived his friends Fred and Elsa Muschenheim. Fred was the president of the Astor. The Muschenheims loved music and adored musicians, and gave large suppers for visiting and resident artists. The dinners for Toscanini were very special occasions because of the risk they entailed.

In the first place, it had to be ascertained what Toscanini thought of the guests that the Muschenheims proposed to invite. The Maestro had the most definite likes and dislikes. These, however, fluctuated unaccountably. He might look with disfavour today on a person he had cherished only yesterday. It was essential to check the current situation with him or his family or his friends.

Furthermore, the Maestro held to a rigid code of behaviour and morals, the test of which even members of his family and his intimate friends had to meet or suffer ostracism. For example, he frowned on divorce. While he cheerfully pointed out that marital fidelity was unnatural to man, he insisted that the legal bonds of matrimony were inviolable. Those of his friends who contemplated divorce had to take into account the loss of his friendship.

In the second place, the Maestro's acceptance of an invitation was no guarantee of his attendance, especially on nights when he was conducting. Everything depended on how the concert or opera went. He might drive up to the stage entrance of Carnegie Hall at 8 p.m.—he was the soul of promptness—in the best of spirits and three hours later leave it in black despair. There could then be no question of supper. The Maestro went straight to his bedroom at the Astor where, crying imprecations at his orchestra or at himself, or both, he finally went exhausted and supperless to bed.

Once, in Milan, after he had conducted an opera at La Scala, he returned dejectedly to his home, where the table was set for the usual delayed dinner. As the members of his family made for the dining-room he placed himself in front of the door and barred their entrance with planted feet and outstretched arms. "What?" he raged at them. "You can *eat* after such a

At the close of a London concert in 1952, the Maestro bows to members of the orchestra. Then he met queuers who had waited three days to see him

Above: Wrestler Primo Carnera chats with the Maestro, who is a keen fan of televised sport

Left: With his nurse standing by, Toscanini has a mud bath. He was visiting his native Italy

With his daughter Wally, Countess Castelbarco, Toscanini smiles for the camera. The photographer is his son Walter. Below: the result

performance? Shame on you . . . shame!" And the family went to bed hungry.

One bitter February evening, the Muschenheims left Carnegie Hall secure in the belief that everything was all right, that nothing had occurred to prevent the Maestro from coming to their house for supper as he had promised. They left, alas, a moment too soon. As the Maestro was taking his final bow, an over-enthusiastic admirer advanced to the stage and placed a floral wreath at the conductor's feet. Quite unaware that his hero associated floral offerings with death rites, the donor was hardly prepared for Toscanini's strange reaction to his gift.

Seeing the wreath, the Maestro blanched, stood irresolute for a moment, then turned tail and fled. He ran straight to the stage-door exit, scampered down the steps two at a time, gained the street and turned into Seventh Avenue, down which he fled at top speed, followed by Bruno Zirato. The Philharmonic manager had tried to intercept his flight and now, winded and distraught, limped helplessly far behind him. Bareheaded, his starched shirt and collar wilted, the frock-coated conductor pushed his way nimbly through the crowds in Times Square, gained his hotel and shut himself in his room for the night.

On those fortunate evenings when nothing untoward happened at Carnegie Hall and the Maestro did arrive, the Muschenheim home seemed, to me at any rate, the most exciting place in the world.

APART from the Maestro, one might find oneself seated at table next to Fritz Kreisler, Jascha Heifetz, Vladimir Horowitz, Lotte Lehmann or some other world-famous artist. The Maestro was, of course, the focal point, and his presence affected all the other guests, both great and near-great.

His opinions of men and events were positive to a degree. Such-and-such an occurrence was a "*scandalo,*" or else, on the contrary, "*una meraviglia.*" This or that woman was "*una bella donna—magnifica,*" or else "*una donna bruta—stupida e schifosa!*" Seated at the head of the table and flanked on either side by a pretty woman (the hostess unselfishly saw to that), Toscanini, his eyes flashing, talked quickly and passionately, his hoarse, raucous, guttural voice holding everyone's attention.

The Maestro bore down heavily on musicians in general and on his colleagues in particular. Most conductors, living or dead, were to him anathema. Especially consigned to perdition were the extravagantly out-and-out *physical* conductors, the crouchers, the leapers, the forward-and-backward bending gymnasts — in fact, the whole tribe of show-offs and charlatans "who think only to themselves, to their frock, to how they look from the back," and "think not at all to the music."

Someone once asked him if he had known many great men in his time. The Maestro looked thoughtful. "Great?" he repeated, shrugging his shoulders and jutting out his lips in disdain. "That is a big word." Then his face suddenly brightened. "Great was Verdi. . . . Yes, Verdi. He was also a good man," he went on. "His music is like his character, strong and honest. He was born a *contadino* (peasant). He remained a *contadino* all his life. Like me," he added. Verdi had been the Maestro's idol.

"I could have known him better . . . but I was in those days very timid. . . . I did not dare to ask to see him. Now I am sorry. Three times in my life I spoke to Verdi. The first time was at La Scala at the rehearsal of *Otello,* I was a conductor then, but I went to play second 'cello in the orchestra so I could be near him. But I was so excited I could not play. When it was finished I ran quickly home. The house was dark, everybody was asleep. I wake-ed my mother. 'Down on your knees to Verdi!' I commanded her. 'Tonight a miracle happen-ed at La Scala.' My poor mother she was so frightened. I force-ed her to leave the bed and kneel down on the floor. She thought I must be crazy.

"The second time I saw Verdi? Ah yes! A long time later I myself was conducting *Otello.* At the rehearsal the *tenore* dragg-ed and dragg-ed, he sing slower and slower. I stopp-ed him. Why you sing so slow? That is not the way you sang at the first performance when I play 'cello in the orchestra. 'Maestro,' he said, 'I sing Verdi's own tempo.' 'It cannot be,' I said. 'We will go and ask Verdi.' We came to Verdi. The *tenore* sang. I play the piano. Verdi listen and said to the *tenore,* 'No, no, you are too slow . . . you are too slow. You know, Toscanini, singers forget quickly. . . .'"

The word "singers" as he uttered it seemed to bring to mind a spate of musical disasters attributable to vocalists he had worked with; for he now abandoned Verdi and launched into a diatribe against all singers, past and present. Seated around the table were several much-admired and quite distinguished concert and opera singers, but the Maestro was not to be deterred by anyone's presence.

Mercifully, someone attempted to divert the Maestro's wrath by inquiring about the third time that he had spoken to Verdi. The stratagem worked. "Ah, yes!" And his savage expression gave way to one of reminiscent tenderness as he related the circumstances of the last time that he saw Verdi alive. He was going to conduct Verdi's last work, the choral *Quattro Pezzi Sacri,* and he called on the composer to discuss matters of tempi and interpretation. "He was very kind," the Maestro said, "so kind. I played the pieces on the piano and he said that the tempi were correct. I wished to stay longer, but I was too timid. I had not the courage even to ask him for a picture."

Here the Maestro's eyes flashed and he looked at the guests around the table accusingly. "Never—*never* have I asked anybody for a picture. *Mai . . . Mai!* And I do not like to give my photograph—only imbe*cile* ask for photographs." The guests smiled indulgently at him; for all of them cherished photographs of the Maestro, which he had freely given and charmingly inscribed.

One day, not many months after my first meeting with Toscanini, I boldly invited him to dinner at my house. To understand my astonishment at my temerity, imagine a young student of mathematics offering to entertain Albert Einstein. Indeed, I was so unprepared for an acceptance that when the Maestro replied, "Why not?" I ran all the way home to tell the great news to my family.

My wife's delight was tempered by the hazards of the operation: Whom to ask with the Maestro? What to serve? How to behave?

We made a list of possible guests. Many turned out to be questionable, what with one thing and another, and we finally decided to take no risks. We invited three of the Maestro's closest friends—one woman and two men. As for the menu, my wife sought the advice of the woman.

TO show our gratitude for the privilege of entertaining the Maestro, my wife extravagantly proposed caviare for an hors-d'oeuvre, but the woman raised her hands in horror. Caviare belonged to the fish category, and the Maestro never ate fish. Indeed, his feelings about fish were so positive that he had been known to flee from a house where he had merely *sniffed* its presence. Soup, yes. Perhaps a veal *cotoletta* but very few vegetables. For drink, champagne and red wine. Later, brandy. He loved to dunk a piece of sugar in brandy, put a match to it, and call everybody's attention to the blue flames in the glass.

That settled, a situation arose at home; learning of the Maestro's impending visit, my parents-in-law, my wife's sister, and a man who was our best and oldest friend flatly insisted on being present. I said no, categorically. My wife's

The peasant who became a genius

A family album picture taken when Toscanini (centre) was eight. He is proud of his humble background

Toscanini, aged thirty-six, and his son. In his younger days, he was sued for hurling his baton at a musician

With his wife and son, Toscanini boards an aircraft. He likes air travel and fast cars

The Maestro's grandchildren find that he is an energetic playmate

A garden snapshot of Toscanini with his daughter Wally and a grandchild

In 1951, Toscanini flew to Milan to visit his wife, then seriously ill

parents could come in after dinner (should all have gone well by then), but not the other two. The only way, I said jokingly, my sister-in-law and our best friend could be present would be as maid and butler.

The two pounced on the idea. Though my wife and I regarded the proposed deception with misgivings, they begged and pleaded and promised to be letter-perfect in the discharge of their duties; and we finally acquiesced. My sister-in-law spent hours carrying trays from the kitchen to the dining-room, and my friend, after many tries, proved to us that he could open the front door with the elegant obsequiousness of a Park Avenue butler (we lived in an unfashionable street on the upper West Side).

An hour before dinner on the fateful day, the "maid," clad in apron and cap, and the "butler" in starched shirt and tails, presented themselves for our inspection. They seemed presentable enough, though my wife thought her sister looked somewhat too presentable. Indeed, except in musical comedies, I had never seen a maid look so fetching. We sat around nervously smoking cigarettes and wishing we had never embarked on an adventure so fraught with peril. At last the door bell rang, and our hearts practically stopped beating. The butler ran downstairs, ushered the Maestro and his party upstairs into the living-room, and discreetly retired.

I had never seen the Maestro look so forbidding. He greeted us perfunctorily, sat down in an armchair aggressively, and began twirling his moustache. We hovered about, tongue-tied. The butler came in with champagne and the Maestro silently took a glass. Only when the maid appeared with a tray of hors-d'oeuvres did the atmosphere lighten.

The Maestro took out his pince-nez, held them sideways, and with his right eye regarded her through the upper lens. The butler announced dinner and we filed into the dining-room. The soup was brought in. There ensued a tense moment as the Maestro dipped his spoon in his plate. He raised the spoon to his lips, tasted the soup, smiled, and said *"buono."*

The dinner was plain sailing after that. The men followed the maid with their eyes as she moved around the table. The Maestro took a *cotoletta* and gave her an approving look.

The dinner over, we rose and went into the living-room. The brandy was served, the piece

of sugar was lighted and the glass was filled with blue flame, to the Maestro's satisfaction and everybody else's delight. The maid came into the room very frequently to empty ash trays and tidy up. This annoyed my wife, who attempted by surreptitious signs to induce her sister not to come in again. But the latter, flushed with success, remorselessly came and went until the visitors took their leave.

When the front door closed, the butler ran up the stairs two at a time and fell laughing and exhausted on a living-room sofa. The maid lit a cigarette and danced around the room in triumph. The party had been a success, the deception had come off perfectly.

That dinner was the beginning of a close friendship. The Maestro thereafter came often to our house, and we learned by trial and error how best to amuse him; we discovered, for example, a naïveté that we had not suspected. Like most Italians, he lacked wit, but he adored slapstick, practical jokes and all manner of juvenile games.

One day we took him into our confidence and asked him to join in tricking his wife. The Maestro enthusiastically agreed and we showed him our latest purchase from the House of Fun, a shop which sold party tricks. It was an ordinary table knife that broke in half when used for cutting meat. This knife was placed next to a bona-fide fork beside Mrs. Toscanini's dinner plate.

The Maestro could hardly wait for dinner to be announced. He sat opposite his wife at table and watched her narrowly when the meat course was served. To his consternation (and ours), the cook had baked a meat loaf and Mrs. Toscanini used only her fork. There ensued an exchange of words in Italian between husband and wife. The Maestro said sharply, "Carla! Have you no knife?" To which his wife replied that she had a knife, but the meat was soft and did not require one. The Maestro appeared to grow angry. "What nonsense! One does not eat meat without a knife. Where are your manners? Where were you brought up?"

She looked up in astonishment. "What is the matter, Papa? I don't need a knife." *"Per Dio Santo!"* the Maestro cried in desperation, "You do, you do! Use your knife, like a civilized person. Like me! Like everybody here. . . . So!" and he ostentatiously cut into his meat. Completely mystified, she shrugged her shoulders, but to avoid a scene, took up the knife and used it. The knife did what was expected of it, and the Maestro, who had watched its application apprehensively, laughed with glee; and his wife, who herself was not above enjoying a practical joke, joined in.

THE relish with which Toscanini entered into such innocent pastimes seemed to be in inverse ratio to the ever-present spiritual agonies of his musical life. The Toscanini who watched the progress of some practical joke with impish expectancy and uninhibited joy was quite different from the one who stayed up half the night wrestling with the scores of the great masters of music, who each morning locked himself in grim rehearsal combat with his orchestra.

For the Toscanini rehearsals were, in the main, battles between conductor and orchestra, and even between Toscanini and himself. And one of the reasons his players did not rebel against the insult and injury he heaped on them was the tongue lashings that the Maestro inflicted on himself when he found he could not communicate his own vision to his men.

At those times, he castigated himself as a bad musician, a conductor unworthy to command an orchestra. "It is not your fault," he would say. "No! Not at all! It is mine. I am the *stupido*. I cannot make this pig of an arm" (and he hacked furiously at his right arm with his left) "say what I wish . . . what the composer wants. . . ." And awed by the agony mirrored in his expressive face, the men forgot their own troubles.

But he could be brutally pitiless in his abuse. At a rehearsal one day, a member of the orchestra had just got through a solo passage when the Maestro rapped for silence. He assumed a pose, hand on hip and baton touching the end of his nose gingerly, which the men knew from long experience signified displeasure and the framing of a suitable punishment.

An ominous silence filled the room as the Maestro stood meditatively tapping the end of his nose. Then, suddenly, he brightened up and called the player by name. The man said eagerly, "Yes, Maestro," and rose to his feet. The Maestro contemplated him benevolently for a few moments. Then he said pleasantly, "Tell me, please, when were you born?" The man, wondering, told him. "And in what month?" the Maestro pursued evenly. The man stammered out the month. "And what day?" The man, now completely unnerved, had to think, and the Maestro waited, patiently tapping his nose. At length the man said weakly, "I think it was a Tuesday, Maestro."

Then the Maestro pounced. *"That,"* he shouted at the startled musician, "was a black day for music!" He raised his baton in the air and poised it for a downbeat. "And now, *da capo*!" (from the beginning) he commanded.

The dreadful moment for the solo passage arrived and passed. This time it was quite another story. The Maestro, still beating away, shouted above the fortissimo sound of the orchestra, "So! So!" and with his left hand threw a kiss to the recently chastened player. "Like this! Like this! So you are *not* stupid. You *can* play well. . . . Santa Madonna . . . Santissima. . . . Now *I* am happy. . . . *You* are happy. . . . *Beethoven* is happy. . . ."

Once, in his younger days at La Scala, he impulsively threw his baton at the head of an erring violinist, catching him painfully in the eye. The man sued for physical damages and the hurt to his self-esteem. The trial was a stirring spectacle, with all Milan divided on the merits of the case. Toscanini put up a spirited defence, contending that his assault was strictly impersonal, merely the reflex action of a sensitive artist in defence of his art. In the end, he was morally exonerated, but he had to pay several thousand lire towards the violinist's medical expenses.

Toscanini heaped insult and injury on his orchestra, but the players rarely objected. They knew that he was equally quick to blame himself

This was a considerable sum for those days, but the Maestro paid cheerfully, deeming it not excessive in return for the satisfaction of defending his art.

When the effects of his encounters at morning rehearsals wore off sufficiently during the day for him to be in a mood to come to dinner, we felt more than ever obliged to devise some entertainment that would erase from his memory his earlier session with his orchestra. On one occasion, feeling sure that he would welcome an evening at a musical play, I made up a party to dine, and to go on to see Ethel Merman in *Panama Hattie*. And, indeed, the prospect of an evening at the theatre pleased the Maestro and he arrived for dinner in the gayest of moods.

SITTING opposite him at the table were my nine-year-old daughter Anne and my twelve-year-old son Blair, who had been permitted to come downstairs so that they might carry through life the memory of having dined with Toscanini.

Throughout dinner, Anne never took her eyes off the Maestro; Blair, however, was unimpressed. He soon began to show signs of boredom, took from his pocket two little magnets and began playing with them. The Maestro, who was still talking, focused his gaze on the magnets. Presently his words trailed off into an incoherent murmur.

"That's a magnet, Maestro," I said. "Yes," he said, "a *magnete*. I know."

"Would you like them?" He nodded eagerly.

"Blair, give the magnets to the Maestro," I commanded. But Blair had put the magnets back into his pocket. "Gee, Dad, I can't," he said, "they don't belong to me." I spoke more sternly to Blair, but still he refused, while the Maestro followed this interchange keenly, as if his fate depended on the outcome. Finally I broke down my son's resistance, and the magnets were grudgingly handed over. The Maestro pocketed them and resumed his anecdote.

It was a charming story of his early home life in Parma, where he was born. The Toscaninis, he said, were very poor. The little Arturo (he was an only son) went hungry; the family diet consisted mainly of bread and soup. "That is why I like soup and bread all my life," he beamed. "I am a peasant, like Verdi. One day my doctor said to me, 'Toscanini, you are well-born.' He means I was born a peasant, strong and simple. My mother was strong, very strong, in character.

"My father, no! He was a good man, but weak. He like-ed to drink." (The Maestro graphically shoved his thumb into his mouth and tilted his head back, by way of illustration.) "He was a tailor—in those days, you know, I wish-ed to be a tailor, too. I would take scissors and cut cloth. The shop was in our living-room. Sometimes the neighbours came and brought their sewing; these people they like-ed to work together in Parma. While they work-ed somebody read aloud from a book. In this way I learn-ed many, many books. And music, too, I learn-ed when I was a little child. Oh yes, in Parma everybody like-ed music."

According to Toscanini, everybody in his native town knew the standard operas. In the Toscanini workshop-living-room the workers frequently broke into song, and little Arturo knew the arias of many operas long before he learned to read music or saw the inside of an opera house. Music, so learned at second-hand, was sometimes apt to be inaccurate. So much so that when Arturo was taken to the gallery of the Parma Opera House to hear his first opera, Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, he was shocked to hear the tenor sing a certain aria in a manner that he, the child Toscanini, considered wrong.

"No, no! You are wrong," the little boy in the gallery, cupping his hands, shouted at the

astonished tenor on the stage. "It goes like this . . ." and the child sang out the tune with all the imperfections he had learned at home.

While he was telling us these stories the Maestro frequently put his hand into the pocket of his jacket to make sure that the *magneti* were still there. We left our house early, and got to the theatre while it was fairly empty ("Artists should never be kept waiting"). The Maestro awaited the rise of the curtain with a child's eagerness.

He laughed extravagantly at Miss Merman's down-to-earth deportment, and admired her lung power.

In the first interval, he stood up and swept the audience with his opera glasses, quite unaware that the people had caught sight of him and were all looking at him. A man came up and said: "Excuse me, are you Maestro Toscanini?" The Maestro, not turning a hair, answered innocently: "No, I am sorry." The man, incredulous and still gazing at him, retreated.

Near the end of the play, I saw that the Maestro was not paying attention to the stage. I whispered: "Is anything wrong?" and he whispered back: "The *magneti*. I have lost them!"

I TOLD him not to worry, that he must have dropped them on the floor, and that when the curtain came down, we would look for them. Until the end of the play he sat, the picture of dejection, his right hand propping up his head, his eyes closed. When the curtain descended, we waited ten minutes for the theatre to empty. We then got down on our hands and knees and searched for the *magneti*. We called over the ushers and they searched the foyers, but all to no avail. We left the theatre and got into the Maestro's car. Usually, after a theatre visit we drove to our house, where we discussed the play, drank brandy, and the Maestro talked and played the piano until early in the morning. This time the Maestro said that he preferred to go home.

When the car stopped at our house I suggested that he might have dropped the magnets on our doorstep on the way to the theatre. "You think?" the Maestro said, brightening up, and he jumped nimbly out of the car and, along with the rest of us, began searching our porch, illuminated by a street lamp. There the *magneti* lay in full view. I picked them up and gave them to the Maestro, who hastily put them in his pocket and suddenly decided that he was "*thirty*" (thirsty) and wanted to drink "some-*thing*."

Mrs. Toscanini demurred, saying that it was late and that her husband had a concert the following afternoon. The Maestro packed her off to their hotel. As the car drove away he commented, "Poor Carla! She is always sleeping. She is old." (She was ten years his junior.) We went upstairs where he drank something, talked for hours, to our delight, played the piano and sang large chunks of operas in his cracked voice.

It was six in the morning before he left reluctantly. The sun had risen and birds were twittering. "I could conduct a concert this moment," he said as he loudly sniffed the morning air. We had no doubt that he could. There was a chill in the air, but he disdained to put on his overcoat. He regarded me pityingly as I shivered on the doorstep and magnanimously advised me to go inside before I caught cold.

When he reached his hotel suite, he told me subsequently, he removed his shoes like any conscience-stricken husband who had been out late and feared to disturb his wife. An hour later, the maid brought him his morning coffee. He spent the morning in study. The afternoon concert went off without incident and to his satisfaction.

In the green room later, I asked him if he felt fatigued after staying up all night. "No!" he said. "When I enjoy what I do, I am never tired. Nothing that I like to do can be bad for me."

NEXT WEEK: I browbeat the fabulous Maestro

Speed In My Blood

Continued from page 19

appointed places, the shores of Coniston were lined with crowds, the launches had fished out any driftwood. All was ready.

The water was unwrinkled save for our slight wash, a light haze faintly mirrored the mountains, mist blotted out the end of the course.

The radio crackled. "All clear. Ready to go."

Bluebird's tow rope was cast off, the launch's motor stalled. Suddenly I became aware of the dead silence and quietness of Coniston, eerie and uncanny and heightening my nervous tension. I put on my helmet and goggles; Leo stood up on the deck, moved over to the engine and pushed home the primers. In that deathly silence they sounded like gunshots. He put back the hatch, shook my hand, patted me on the shoulder and was gone. I have never felt so utterly lonely in all my life.

I went through the starting drill, Bluebird crashed to life and was away. She slid, snaked and slithered at the ninety mark, moved smoothly at 120 and in a few moments there was the sensation once again of rushing at a waterfall. The red buoy smeared up, and a quick glance showed the speed at 150 with the needle flickering still higher. Bluebird was bang on track, steady as a rock. All was going well.

I found myself thinking: This is too good to be true.

The black-and-white chequered buoy at the middle of the measured mile leaped at me. Suddenly, I saw a slither of whitish smoke. Before there was time to think, a gout of scalding oil hit the windscreen, slopped round and smothered my face and goggles.

I WAS terrified. Automatically my foot came off the throttle—normally at that speed such maximum deceleration meant the end. Bluebird skidded sideways for fully two hundred yards and turned almost facing the starting point.

I thought: This is the end. She's going over.

There is no hope of baling out of a speedboat; you hit the water and become so much pulp. But, having thought this was my end, suddenly I found myself calm and unafraid; all my fear and nervous tension evaporated.

Instead I was thinking: By God, you're going to look such a damn fool.

Somehow I must have done the right things to bring Bluebird under control again. My foot was on the throttle, the speed was moving up, we were facing the right way on track and I was smearing the oil away from my goggles with the back of my right glove while peering out of their sides at the lake shore. The red marker at the end of the measured mile slipped by. I eased back the throttle, tore off my goggles, slipped on another pair hanging round my neck and wiped the windscreen clear. Bluebird was now about one hundred yards from the shore, rather too near for comfort.

Then, with the engine idling, I took a quick look round to see what had caused the spurt of oil. On the port side one of the hatches giving access to the inside of the hull was missing. That seemed an explanation.

"Air must have been sucked in and sprayed out oil in the diptray under the engine," I told myself. "Through some odd aero-dynamic effect it must have got sucked into the cockpit. The oil has now been cleared from the tray. There's nothing to worry about."

I turned Bluebird round and had her moving at nearly a hundred by the time she came on course again. She passed the beginning of the measured mile on the return run at about 140, but, although my foot was hard down on the throttle, Bluebird no longer had the same urge. She passed the buoy at the end of the mile and I reflected that, with the high speed at the start of the first turn, Father's record might just have been clipped, but only just.

My course back to the slipway took me towards a launch with a number of press photographers, all of whom had repeatedly asked for a close-up shot of Bluebird at speed. It had seemed risky, in case the boat should slide and caper about, to pass too near the press launch during the trial runs, but now it was clear that Bluebird was most controllable at about 120 miles an hour.

Easing her down to that speed, I passed within nine feet of the photographers to give them the shot they wanted. It appeared to them, however, that Bluebird was out of control and was going to collide with their launch: one man jumped overboard, four stood mesmerized and only one got his picture.

Bluebird drifted back towards the middle of the lake and Leo came out in the launch. He looked white and disturbed. When Bluebird skidded on the downward run, it suddenly occurred to him that my return throttle spring had broken, and he began to listen for the crash of Bluebird piling up on the shore. We began to discuss the possible causes for Bluebird's antics while waiting for Phillip Mayne and the other timekeepers to work out their times.

Soon the officials' launch approached.

"Well," Phillip yelled, giving the thumbs-up sign. "You've got it."

We shook hands all round. It was a wonderful moment. My emotions were a mixture of pride for my father's sake, relief from fear and tension, and a gladness that the whole thing was over.

The news that it was thought that a new record had been established was broadcast at 8 a.m. by the B.B.C. Leo and I, and others who had come out with him in the pilot launch, chatted for a time, and then Bluebird was towed over to the pier by the slipway. I noticed the timekeepers in a group by themselves on the shore; they made no signs of walking over to us.

Seeing them standing quietly, looking grave, I stared for a moment or two. And suddenly my excitement and elation evaporated. Their attitude could mean only one thing: their final figures had been checked and found inaccurate. I had not broken the record.

I walked down the pier and up to Phillip and I could see there were tears in his eyes. "I'm terribly sorry, Donald," he said. "There's been a mistake. We've checked up . . . a simple error . . . quite an easy thing to happen . . . you were about two miles an hour under the record."

We were all bitterly disappointed, but perhaps I was personally not so surprised, realizing what the check during the run down had meant in loss of speed.

Tired and dispirited, we set to work to discover the cause of the rush of oil: we found that a race-cage had collapsed on the final shaft on the gearbox and that a metal cover had been smashed, resulting in lubricating oil gushing out and being sucked into the cockpit by the slipstream. We also discovered severe damage to the propshaft bearings.

Our course was clear: we should have to return to Reigate with Bluebird, repair and overhaul her and come back the following year, hoping that the Americans would not beat us to the record in the meantime. We packed everything, made our *au revoirs* and set out in a convoy of three cars with Bluebird following on a truck.

Lake Coniston was a sheet of placid blue, calm and inviting. I stopped the car and took a last look round. The sun glittered on the lake and it seemed almost as though it was alive, winking at me and mocking me for my failure.

You bitch, I thought. But we'll be back. . . .

WE were ready for Coniston again by the summer of 1950. By this time Bluebird had been stripped down and all damage repaired. She also had an extra cockpit built in the deck to the right of mine. This was for Leo, who was determined to study Bluebird's behaviour at close quarters during the trials. Also we had a new design of propeller which we hoped would squeeze even more speed from the boat. By this time, too, the record had gone to America. Kaiser's boat had failed, but a new contender, Stanley Sayers, had increased the record to 160.32 miles an hour in a boat called Slo-Mo-Shun IV.

We were ready for our first run with the new propeller on August 17. Leo and I got in our cockpits and were towed out into the lake at 6.30 a.m. We opened up and moved off. Rapidly, Bluebird thundered up to 145 miles an hour, steadied and then suddenly bolted forward. I saw the speed indicator moving up to 160. Then I felt a wallop in the ribs.

It was Leo, and he was pointing frantically at the water-temperature gauge. I stared at it—the needle seemed to be missing. My foot left the throttle and we glided to a gentle drift, while I stared at the temperature gauge and discovered that the needle had been "off the clock."

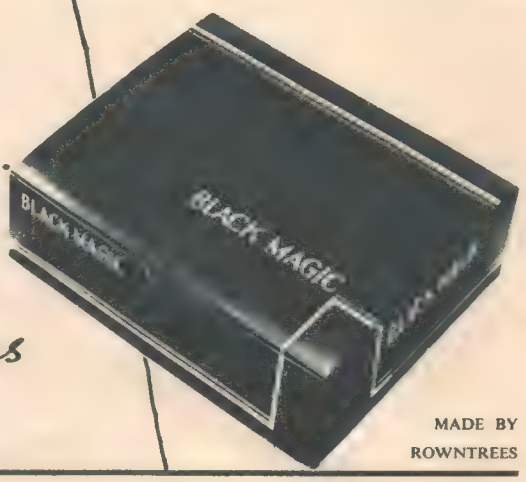
We were towed ashore to the accompaniment of ominous cracklings from

2. Saw him hanging about the quad, but when I went down he said, "Fancy meeting you!" Of course I didn't let him know I'd seen him waiting.

But today he came clean and sent me a box of heavenly Black Magic chocolates – oh, those centres! I think anyone who chooses Black Magic must be nice, don't you, so

THE REST OF THE STORY

There are two reasons why Black Magic chocolates are worth writing home about. First, those really luscious centres. And then, however much you pay, you won't find *better* chocolates than Black Magic. This is because Rowntrees put all the value into the *chocolates*, packing them simply, but elegantly, in a smart black box.



MADE BY ROWNTREES

the engine. Within twenty minutes we saw that four cylinder heads were cracked and the R37, our best Rolls-Royce engine, was ruined. We developed the ciné camera film of the instrument panel, made while Bluebird was running. It showed there had been a water temperature rise from eighty-five degrees centigrade to 110 degrees in something like three seconds.

Why had the water temperature risen so suddenly? We were completely mystified. We drove down to London to consult engineers at the Admiralty, but learned nothing useful. We installed our spare engine, made further runs, but still we had no answer to the abrupt rise in temperature at over 150 miles an hour. The general opinion was that we were wasting our time.

"You're playing with old iron, Donald. Pack it in. You haven't a hope of breaking the record with Bluebird now, but you stand a good chance of breaking your neck," I was told frequently.

But I just could not give in like that. Both Leo and I had a suspicion that at speeds approaching 150 a strange thing was happening to Bluebird. There was no sign of her nose lifting, but it did seem to us that her stern was rising. But whenever we mentioned this point to the experts there were shouts of laughter. "Don't be a clot, old boy. How could the stern rise when a force of over 2,400 lb. is needed to lift it? There's not that power in that old bit of iron."

Nevertheless, Leo and I put our heads together and agreed that, as the stern was coming off the water, the water-scoop must also be lifting and not fulfilling its function. "We'll move the water-scoop forward," I suggested, "and we'll put it under the starboard sponson, opposite the prop rotation. That will keep her running straight."

So we got to work on the boat, and by September the water-scoop was in its new position and all was ready for another run. Leo and I climbed into our cockpits. We opened up and roared down Coniston, watching the temperature gauge anxiously. At the end of the run we turned and came back touching 150. The needle remained steady at eighty-five degrees.

"And that," I told Leo when we got ashore, "is clear proof that the stern is rising. Now we can really open up."

During the remainder of October we worked Bluebird up to nearly 160, but not quite. We could see no way of getting the extra few miles an hour to regain the world record, and as the season was now well advanced we decided to pack up and sort out our ideas during the winter.

Now we settled down to theorize on the cause of Bluebird's stern rising and the sharp acceleration of speed after 140 miles an hour. Information from the United States about Stanley Sayers's record in Slo-Mo-Shun IV was available. It seemed clear that he had discovered the same phenomenon, taken advantage of it quickly and called it "prop riding."

The explanation seemed to be this: up to a certain speed over one hundred miles an hour a boat on three suspension points rides along normally—on the two forward planes and the stern, or transom. But at a higher speed the transom lifts and the third point of support becomes the propeller itself. And instead of both propeller blades being fully submerged the boat runs with one blade out of the water, and runs faster.

At first sight this seems impossible. But it has to be remembered that the amount of drag exerted by the propeller shaft rises very sharply as the speed of the boat increases. If the shaft lifts clear of the water, then this drag is reduced enormously. It might also be thought, however, that with the shaft clear and only one blade of the propeller at work the thrust of the propeller would be sharply reduced. But we theorized that only one blade is "working" even when the propeller shaft is submerged.

If you place a hand in the water parallel to a boat moving at a few miles an hour a small trough will form behind it. The same kind of trough is formed by the propeller shaft, which is in front of the propeller; the two blades rotate in this trough and only one is fully submerged. If the drag exerted by the shaft is removed and the propeller continues to work normally the boat gains speed by the removal of the drag.

"Oh, if you're running us home there's no need for us to think about going yet"

Having found this explanation, it also became clear to us why the engine temperature had jumped so alarmingly: the water-scoop being lifted clear of the water had resulted in the engine not being cooled but becoming overheated; when the scoop settled into the water again and functioned once more, the sharp fall in temperature simply cracked the cylinder heads. This accounted for the damage to the Rolls-Royce 37.

People scoffed at our theory on "prop riding." "Impossible!" they said. "Boat running faster with only one propeller blade submerged! It's ridiculous."

But we were convinced and began planning methods for rebuilding Bluebird as a prop-rider. While we were planning I received a pleasant invitation. It was to take Bluebird over to Lake Garda, in Italy, and to compete for the Oltranza Cup in May, 1951. The prospect of working in Italian sunshine was most attractive after all the rain and disappointments at Coniston. I decided to accept.

Bluebird rested on her cradle in the centre of the old stable of a Reigate hotel while we spent the full month of January, 1951, redesigning her as a prop-rider. At the end of that time the number of modifications needed was impressive.

"We've got three months," I said at the beginning of February, once the designing was completed. "It's going to be a near thing."

We worked seven days a week in that old stable adjoining the hotel. We had our food sent out to us and we went at it during all the hours of daylight and deep into the night, almost without a break; Saturday and Sunday, each was just another day. It was a wonderful team.

By the beginning of May, 1951, we were ready. We moved over to Lake Garda and trials began. But there were plenty of troubles ahead. During one run, at about 130 miles an hour, Bluebird began to move across the lake in a series of gigantic corkscrew leaps. One of these leaps was so long that a propeller blade was bent back nearly double when the boat hit the water again. No adjustments we made seemed to result in any improvement and we were seriously worried. We also struck trouble with the R.19 engine.

One morning the engine cut while Bluebird was rounding a buoy. When we started it up again flames began to spurt from the supercharger air-intake. Leo grabbed a fire extinguisher, heaved himself out of his cockpit and ran along to the fire, shouting: "Keep her turning. Keep her turning."

He wanted me to keep the compressed-air starter in action so that the engine would pick up and blow out—or rather suck out—the flames. He seemed entirely unconscious of the possibility that, if Bluebird did move off, he might be thrown against the exhaust or into the water, where he might be cut by the propeller. It was typical of Leo's courage and concern to get out of trouble the quickest way.

I switched off the main air cock while a crash tender tore towards us. We put out the fire, but not before sufficient damage had been caused to make an engine change necessary.

The day of the race arrived. It was to be run in two sections or classes to reduce the risk of accidents. Bluebird and Miss Windermere, driven by Norman Buckley, were in one section; and in the other were some eight or nine boats from France and Italy.

Every boat was to complete four laps of a five-mile triangular course. All boats were to make flying starts and two prizes were to be awarded: the Oltranza Cup for the two fastest consecutive laps, and the Grand Prix for the fastest overall time from the start. The record for the two laps stood at just over one hundred kilometres an hour and that for the best lap at 102. This was just above the best time for the full race.

The weather was perfect for the race. Lake Garda reflected the brilliant blue of the sky, an immense crowd turned out and flags fluttered from almost every building. Bluebird and Miss Windermere were to race during the late afternoon. We had Bluebird out by her tender in plenty of time, warmed up on soft and then hot plugs, Leo and I in our cockpits.

The five-minute gun sounded and I started my stopwatch. I ran the engine briefly and she purred sweetly. I stopped her, banged in the dog-clutch. Again I pressed the air starter with my left foot, turned on the magneto. Instead of roaring away, Bluebird spat, phut-phutted, spat—and stopped.

Leo and I glanced at one another.

I went through the starting drill again. The same noises were repeated, Bluebird rolled lazily.

"Prime her again, Leo," I shouted.

In a few moments the primers were pushed home. But still Bluebird would not start.

I went through the drill once more. The engine burst into life and I ran it up as much as I dared to clear the bores. I stopped it, banged in the dog-clutch again, only to hear the earlier spluttering repeated. The compressed-air bottles were running out. We recharged them, tried another start. But it was no use.

Then we heard the second gun—the zero gun—and we knew that Buckley was away in Miss Windermere. We were frantic.

"Off with the cowlings, change all the plugs," I shouted.

And the whole team went to work, removing twenty-four plugs that were very hot by this time, blistering everybody's fingers; but not a plug, not a spanner was dropped while we got the fresh plugs in. Leo and I kept up a ceaseless stream of cursing; the tension was so great that our old friend the Italian boatman, who could not understand a word we were saying, cuffed his small son for asking a question at the wrong moment. Poor little nipper, he was such a nice kid. The twenty-four fresh plugs were in. Leo shot home the primers.

"Let's go straight off, Don," he shouted. "In with the clutch, don't bother to warm her up."

This time the engine started. Bluebird shot away.

I was furious. We had lost all chance of winning the Grand Prix, but I was determined we were going to have the Oltranza Cup. We could still do the two fastest consecutive laps.

We came up to the starter buoy at well over one hundred miles an hour and tore down the first side of the triangle. When we came up to the turn I took my foot off the throttle, swung over the wheel. Bluebird lurched, Leo and I were pressed against the sides of our cockpits, the engine screamed as the propeller left the water temporarily, and then, as it hit again, Bluebird surged forward and sounded as though she were being dragged over gravel. I pressed my foot on the throttle, the boat began to slip and slide, finally came straight and we shot off for the next turn. There the performance was repeated.

We turned round each buoy in a matter of twenty to twenty-five yards. And it was pretty exciting with the boat lurching, the engine screaming and spray flying in all directions. Bluebird slid all over the place like a thoroughbred horse full of oats and rarin' to go—and how she went with 2,400 horse power under her belt!

During the second lap the team saw something appear to fly away from the boat. Later we were to discover that the fin under the starboard sponson had been torn out by the roots—it ripped away from thirty-six stainless-steel bolts as though they were so many matches and, with a razor edge and weighing some 12 or 13 lb., it whistled harmlessly into the lake. It could have sliced a man in half.

We had quite a ride, one of the most thrilling I have ever experienced, and I must say I enjoyed it. Eventually I saw a chequered flag waved at us and presumed that it was for us and meant that we had completed our four laps. I eased down to about fifty and shouted to Leo:

"Have we done four laps yet?"

There was no answer.

"Leo! Have we done four laps?"

Still no answer. I looked over to his cockpit. He seemed pale and shaken. Suddenly I appreciated that our wild ride and Bluebird's antics at the turns must have been a considerable strain for him; he was just sitting there hanging on, wondering what might happen next.

"Hi, Leo," I yelled again. "Have we done four laps?"

Leo leaned across to me. He looked pale. He said:

"I don't know. I don't know anything. To hell with the laps, to hell with the Oltranza Cup. To hell with you, too!"

I concluded that we had done four laps.

Leo was soon his very cheerful self

MARRIAGE—1

Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards.

Benjamin Franklin

again. Back at the slipway we learned that Bluebird had increased the lap record to 159 kilometres an hour, which meant that the laps had been completed in just under one hundred miles an hour; she had also increased the race record to 157 kilometres an hour. We had lost the Grand Prix by our late start, but we had won the Oltranza Cup.

In September we were back at Lake Coniston, determined to make another attempt on the world record. Bluebird, however, was still being temperamental. We had trouble with corkscrew leaps on every run. The month slipped by and we had not solved our problems.

Early in October I had an idea. "Let's make a check on how the water flow behaves under the boat. If we paint the bottom of the planes and the hull, any paint that is not washed away after a run may give us a clue," I suggested.

The idea worked: we found that flow breakdown was being caused on the planing wedges of the forward planes, and from this we deduced that their angle was still incorrect. We set to work on the necessary modifications.

The year had now moved to mid-autumn and the weather turned bitterly cold; snow mantled the mountains and each morning we awoke to a white, freezing world.

We worked flat out on Bluebird, housed in the open boathouse, whose only protection from the weather was tarpaulin draped over tubular steel. They were agonizing conditions, the cold gnawing right into us, our fingers often stiff with pain.

Late one night we were just about to knock off and return to the hotel when we heard a loud squelch. There was a moment's silence and suddenly Leo roared: "Muck pot! I'm in the grease pot!"

And he was, half way up his calf: he had stepped right into a 25-lb. tin of grease. It provided a touch of slapstick comedy and we all roared with laughter at Leo hopping around with a look of intense indignation.

Soon the sponsons were entirely rebuilt. Next morning we took Bluebird out, and to our intense delight found that she behaved perfectly: at last our troubles were ended. There was a touch of wriggle at ninety, but she climbed easily to 150, firm as a rock; and the speed went up and up. It was an exhilarating run, and at the end of the lake, while turning leisurely, I shouted to Leo:

"Good show, boy! We've got her right now. I'll give her the lot on the way back."

Leo grinned happily and gave me the thumbs up.

Bluebird came on to her course like a swallow—swift, easy and graceful. My foot went down, down on the throttle and I watched the air-speed indicator needle swing up smoothly past 150 and on to 160. And then up, up and on to 170.

I found myself thinking: This is away past the world record. Good old Bluebird!

It was a thrilling moment; for months Bluebird had leaped around like a wild thing at speeds between 130 and 140; and now to have passed through that fringe of instability and find the boat running smoothly was terrific.

The end of the measured mile flashed past.

NEXT instant I felt Bluebird shudder as though a red-hot coal had been dropped on naked flesh. There was a shattering crash like a crack of thunder and Bluebird seemed to go mad. She skidded left and then right, then seemed to be gripped by gigantic brakes. I eased my foot from the throttle, cut the switches; Leo cut the fuel right off.

In dead silence, accentuated after the roaring of the engine, Bluebird drifted to a standstill in a matter of one hundred yards.

"Hell!" I said. "We've bought something this time."

One of the launches was nearby. I shouted and waved it over. While it approached, Leo said: "Listen, there's water running in somewhere."

He scrambled out of his cockpit and whipped off one of the engine hatches. "It's pouring in here," he grunted.

When the launch came up I called for a towline.

"Get us back as quick as you can."

Bluebird began to settle in the water. "Make for that nearest point," I called to the launch; it was the spot where Father had his boathouse in 1947.

Gloomily Leo and I stood on the foredeck, took off our lifejackets in disgust, threw them down, lit cigarettes. I noticed the launch seemed to be making heavy weather of towing us and, turning aft, saw to my horror that the deck was awash.

"Look!" I shouted to Leo.

He took a quick glance, stared at me for a moment and then we made a grab for our life jackets.

Bluebird settled deeper and deeper into the lake, the launch strained at the towline, the water came up and up and the boat eased gently below the surface about fifty yards from the shore. The icy water took my breath away as she went under, and Leo and I, supported by our jackets, gasped and spluttered for a few moments until we were hauled aboard the launch.

I stared down at Bluebird. Under the clear, slightly greeny water of the lake, she lay on a shallow bank, her nose tilted slightly towards the surface, her bright sapphire dulled; she looked very lonely and somehow, rather tired.

I glanced at Leo, and with a shock I realized that he seemed to have shrunk. His shoulders were humped, his head was bowed, his face was a mixture of grimness and sadness. And suddenly he had aged. From the days when I had toddled over to him in the garage at Povey Cross I had never seen him like this.

I put a hand on his shoulder, and for a few moments we stood looking down at the old boat. There was nothing to say.

Eventually we got Bluebird ashore, jacked her on to blocks and began an examination. We found a gaping hole in the hull. All the shaft bearings had been smashed away and there was a blade missing from the propeller. We debated endlessly whether Bluebird had struck a submerged log or whether water pressure had burst her hull. I believed she had hit a log—a thousand-to-one chance.

Because of an awkward bank it was impossible to load the boat direct on to her lorry from the shore; we should have to float her with barrels and tow her over to the slipway. But first we had to strip all her machinery clear, then nail up the hole in her hull with planks and sacking.

It was heartbreaking work. The machinery was smothered in oil and we had to get it out with hammers and chisels—the engine, the gearbox, the shaft bearings, the instruments, tanks and the cowlings. We had spent hundreds of hours perfecting Bluebird, and now here we were slaughtering her like butchers. We winced as we broke up all that beautiful machinery to make the hull a light, floatable shell. Leo was heart-broken and I was moody and depressed.

There was no point in rebuilding Bluebird. Not only would it have been costly, but we knew that at around 170 miles an hour she had reached the limit of her speed; and we could expect that Stanley Sayers might be able to push the record still higher in the United States, while John Cobb might also go much faster in his jet Crusader, now approaching the final stages of preparation.

Eventually, I returned to my machine tool business and Leo joined the firm as chief inspector, but neither of us really had our hearts in our work. For several weeks we moped frequently together, reliving the fun and the excitement we had enjoyed with Bluebird, reflecting sadly on the wonderful, thrilling burst of speed the old boat had produced on her final run. We were certain that the record had been within our grasp.

THE months dragged by, but we had no plans. We followed the progress of John Cobb's Crusader, and I was enthusiastic for his chances of regaining the world record for Britain. Then two important events occurred in the speedboat world: in July, 1952, Stanley Sayers increased his own world water speed record in Slo-Mo-Shun IV from 160.32 to 178.49 miles an hour; and two months later there came the sad and shocking news of the death of John Cobb on Loch Ness.

John Cobb was killed on September 29, 1952, when his jet-powered Crusader disintegrated while travelling at an estimated speed of 240 miles an hour in the measured mile. He was thrown some fifty yards from the spot where the boat submerged. I was deeply distressed. I had known him from my childhood days and greatly admired and respected him. At the same time, I felt his death to be a challenge.

It seemed to me that, for the sake of British prestige and also because I felt spurred to continue trying to solve the problems of instability that he had encountered, I should go after that world record again. The more I thought of John Cobb, the firmer became my resolve.

Once again I sought out Leo. "Leo," I said, "we are going to have a new boat. And we're going right out after that world record."

And, once again, his eyes danced, a great smile spread over his face, and we thumped one another on the back.

NEXT WEEK: I plan to build a jet Bluebird—and go begging for £10,000

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Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER

A girl in love leaped from the battlements —and brought Lacock Abbey to the Talbots

IN 1833, William Henry Fox Talbot, squire of Lacock, in Wiltshire, went to Italy for a holiday. There he sketched with a camera obscura, in which a lens threw pictures upon paper.

It occurred to Talbot that such pictures could be recorded permanently. He developed his idea and in 1835 made the first photographic negative in the world, of the oriel windows of the abbey's long gallery.

Fox Talbot's granddaughter, Matilda Talbot, lives today in part of the beautiful old abbey which came to her family in Queen Elizabeth's reign. John Talbot was courting Olive Sharington, the heiress of Lacock, whose father would not consent to their marriage. One night Olive, who was talking from the abbey battlements to young Talbot, said "I will jump down to you." Her lover replied laughing, for he did not believe her, "Then I will catch you."

To his horror she took a flying leap, but the wind caught her petticoats and broke her fall. She fell into Talbot's arms, and he was struck down as if dead. With difficulty he was revived, and Olive's father agreed that in the circumstances the young people had better get married.

Olive Sharington's uncle, Sir William, had bought Lacock Abbey from Henry VIII after its dissolution as a religious house. When, in May, 1546, he became Vice-Treasurer of the Bristol Mint, he illegally coined shilling pieces and falsified the Mint accounts. While under suspicion he sought the protection of Thomas Seymour, the Lord High Admiral, and abetted him in his plots against the Crown. Sharington was sent to the Tower. Having confessed and betrayed Seymour he was released and allowed to buy back his forfeited Lacock property.

The nunnery at Lacock was founded in 1229 by Ela, Countess of Salisbury. In widowhood the Countess Ela took the veil herself. When her younger and beloved son was killed fighting in the Holy Land, Ela claimed that she saw a vision of him, clothed in armour, ascending to Heaven in a cloud of glory.

Open: Monastic remains: April to October, daily (except Fridays), 2 till 6. November to March, Mondays and Wednesdays, 2 till dusk. House: April to September, Wednesdays and bank holidays, 2 till 6.

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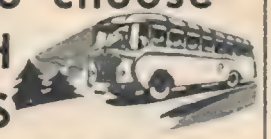

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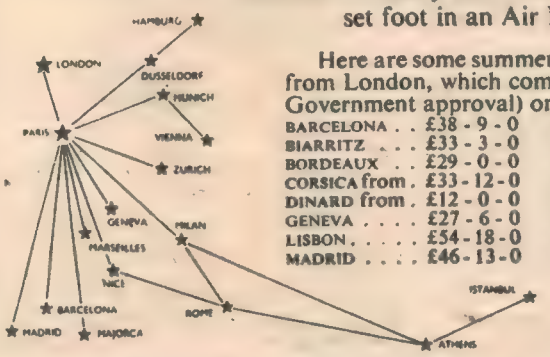

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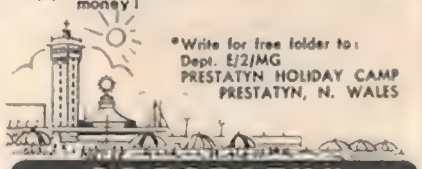

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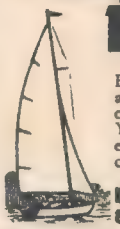

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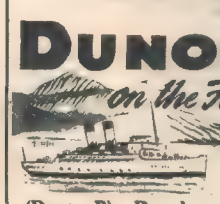

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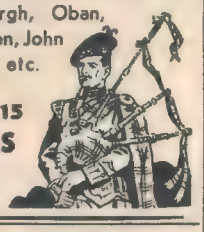

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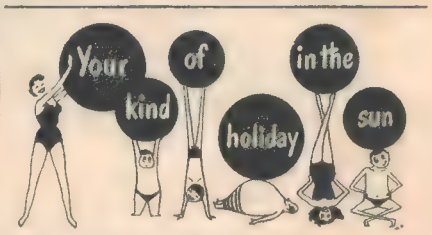

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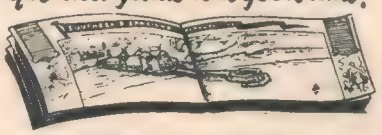

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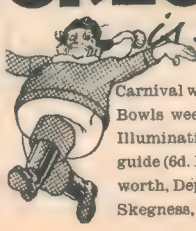

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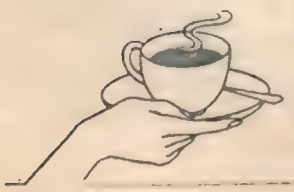

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Midnight On The Lagoon

Continued from page 30

the wide stretches of lagoons, every foot of which he knew so well, gave him no pleasure.

At half-past eight he was waiting in his launch. The dusk was crowding over the city and the floodlights broke in a hundred different colours from the façade of the Basilica of San Marco. Barteo sat hunched up in the stern of his launch, shoulders bent as though the weight of the world rested on them.

"Barteo!"

She was standing on the quay, gay and smiling, her body sheathed in a gold dress, the sparkle of jewels about her neck and arms, a fur across the lovely, bare, brown shoulders. So beautiful, he thought, and so evil. With her, in evening dress, were Giasone and another man — Signor Lamonte, a big, hulking figure with a ponderous, humorous face.

BARTEO went forward and helped them all in. "So this is Barteo," said Signor Lamonte. "My wife has told me about you. She is very fond of you. . . ." He laughed and put his arm round his wife's shoulders, drawing her to him. "Maybe, even, I am a little jealous, eh?"

The man's good humour and his obvious affection for his wife touched Barteo.

"You need not worry, *caro*," said his wife, kissing him lightly on the cheek. "Barteo has a wife who means everything to him."

"Good—that's how it should be," boomed Signor Lamonte.

Barteo caught Giasone's eyes on him. The impulse strong in him at that moment died away. He bent over the engine to start it.

They went out across the waters to Torcello, a good half-hour away. Behind him Barteo could hear them laughing and joking, and the sound made him feel sick.

He switched the headlight on as they ran into the narrow canal cut that led up to the landing stage for the Locanda restaurant. He helped them all out and then sat there, watching them as they went up the little stretch of rough road to the Locanda. The lights were on in the garden and the night was warm and still.

He sat there, unmoving. Other boats came in and discharged people for the restaurant. One or two of the boatmen tried to talk to him, but he was morose and they soon left him.

It was nearly three hours, close to midnight, before he heard them coming back. There was a spate of talk and laughter between them and he heard Signor Lamonte's voice booming out.

As Barteo helped him aboard, Signor Lamonte said, "My wife tells me you're a good singer, Barteo. You must give us some songs on the way back." His breath smelled of wine and he had a couple of bottles under his arm.

"Barteo shall fill the night with song, *caro*," said Signora Lamonte, and she put her arm about her husband's shoulder and rubbed her cheek against his. Barteo turned away, unable to watch.

Giasone came forward and stood by him as the launch swept out into the darkness. In the stern Signor Lamonte was talking and laughing loudly.

"Listen to the old fool," muttered Giasone. "He is drunk already. It will be easy."

Barteo said nothing.

"You have picked a good spot? Well away from the track of other boats?"

Barteo nodded.

"Good! In a little while it will be all over."

"Giasone!" roared Signor Lamonte. "Come and join us." Giasone turned away from Barteo.

From that moment Barteo lived in a black dream full of anxiety. When the lights of Venice were still distant on the steely face of the lagoon waters, he stopped the launch and switched off the headlights.

"Song and wine!" shouted Giasone.

Barteo sang, and the bottle went round. Signor Lamonte, full of wine and good spirits, joined in. Then, after about ten minutes, it happened. Signor Lamont stood up, announcing that he would sing a song. His great bulk swayed unsteadily against the night. Barteo saw Giasone rise and throw himself against the man. There was a shout, a moment of struggle, and then Signor Lamonte was overboard.

Giasone jumped forward to Barteo, the automatic in his hand. "*Avanti! Presto!*"

Barteo started the engine and with a roar and a spume of spray the launch moved away into the darkness towards Venice. Not for five minutes would Giasone allow Barteo to put the headlights on.

They stood beside him and for a long time nothing was said. Giasone had his arm around Signora Lamont and her head was on his shoulder.

"It is done, *cara*. . . ."

Slowly he released her. He pulled his wallet from his pocket and began to count out notes.

"Here!" He handed them to Barteo. Mechanically, Barteo took them, crisp and thick in his fingers. "And remember," said Giasone, "you have only to say one wrong word. . . ." The automatic showed in his hand.

Signora Lamonte reached out and pushed the gun down. "Barteo is with us. He understands."

She stood there, her slim figure illuminated by the backwash of the launch's headlights . . . beautiful, and the smile on her face unshadowed by any memory of the evil so close behind them. . . .

Barteo sat with Signora Lamonte and Giasone in a room on the second floor of the *questura*. Outside ran the Rio dei Greci where the launch was moored. Barteo listened to Giasone telling the story of the accident and he marvelled at the man's calm and assurance. Signor Lamonte had been a little drunk. . . . It was so unfortunate. . . . They had searched and searched frantically. . . . Alas, he could not swim.

The police captain got up and, going to a cupboard, drew out a bottle and a glass. He came back and poured some brandy for Signora Lamonte. But over her head his eyes were on Barteo.

"You searched for him? With your headlights?"

"*Si, Capitano*," said Barteo. "But the currents are strong out there. He must have been swept away quickly." The captain's eyes never left him. He knew Barteo, knew his old record. He sat down at the table and began to make some notes.

Giasone said, "We did everything we could. In the end I had to force Signora Lamonte to accept the fact that there was nothing more we could do but come to you. She would have stayed there all night." Signora Lamonte was the picture of a woman numbed with shock.

When Giasone had finished, the captain rose and said: "We will send a launch out to make another search." He nodded at Barteo. "Come, you can take them to the place."

Barteo followed him out of the room and, as he walked, he could feel the stiff crackle of notes from the hundred thousand lire which Giasone had paid him on the way back.

When the two were gone Signora Lamonte looked at Giasone.

"It will be all right, *caro*?"

Giasone nodded. "Don't worry. If Barteo speaks now he accuses himself as well as us. He has the money. He will keep his mouth shut." He took her hand and kissed it gently.

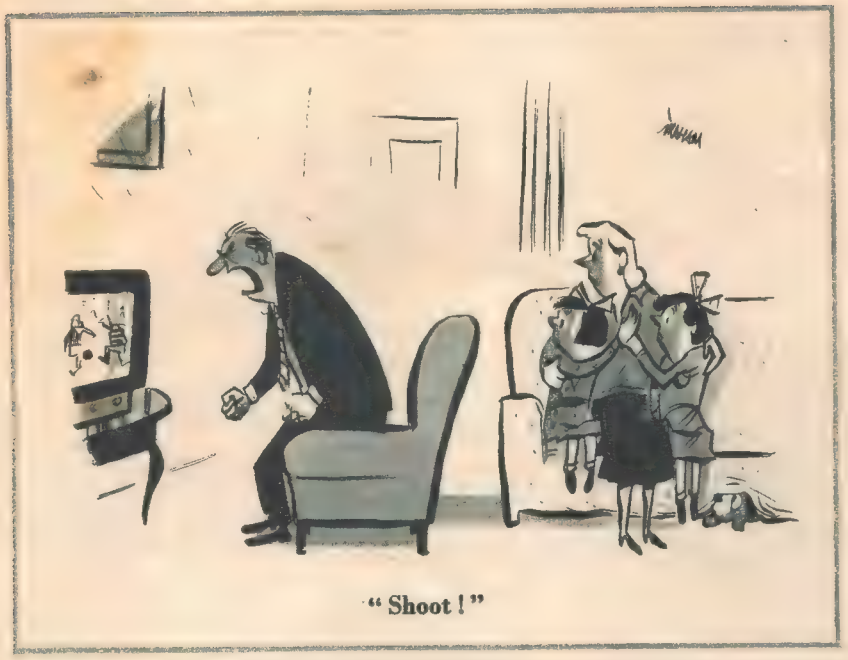
They sat there and they waited.

They waited a long time. So long

MARRIAGE—2

It is a woman's business to get married as soon as possible, and a man's to stay unmarried as long as he can.

Bernard Shaw



"Shoot!"

that Signora Lamonte said finally, anxiety moving into her voice, "Why are they so long? Why do they leave us here?"

Giasone shrugged. "You know the police. They have no respect for people's feelings." But there was an edge of doubt in his own voice and he got up, glancing at his watch. It was too long. Over half an hour. He began to move towards the door, to find someone and make a protest.

But as he neared the door there was the sound of voices from outside and it swung open. Giasone stepped back and Signora Lamonte rose and came to his side.

Into the room came the police captain and Barteo. Behind them, wrapped in blankets, was the bulky figure of Signor Lamonte.

"*Caro!*" cried Signora Lamonte, all her woman's quickness coming to her aid. "You are safe!" She ran forward to him, but he thrust her aside roughly. As she stumbled he looked across at Giasone: "You are welcome to her."

Even then Giasone tried. "But Signor Lamonte, there is some terrible mistake. When we struggled it was only horseplay, in fun . . . a tipsy joke."

Barteo cut in sharply, "You meant to murder him."

The police captain said dryly to Giasone, "Signora Lamonte and you are under arrest for the attempted murder of Signor Lamonte."

Giasone's hand dropped swiftly to his pocket and he turned towards Barteo. "You dirty little——"

Signor Lamonte, astonishingly quick for so big a man, jumped forward and took Giasone by the wrist, twisting it vigorously. The automatic dropped to the floor.

Signor Lamonte picked it up. "Barteo is my friend," he said. "My very good friend. But for him—and I shall repay him handsomely—I should indeed be floating in the lagoon."

There was a grim smile of satisfaction on his face as he looked from Giasone to his wife. "When I stepped aboard Barteo's launch in Venice this evening, he stole my wallet. On the way over he slipped a letter into it. At Torcello, as he helped me ashore, he replaced my wallet.

"He is an expert pick-pocket, but no murderer. When I took out my wallet to pay the bill at the restaurant I found the letter. I read it in front of you, but you were too busy looking into one another's eyes to notice. Love is blind. . . ."

He laughed. "Barteo explained everything in the letter. He said that he would stop the launch in a part of the lagoon where—although far from land—the water was only two feet deep, so that I could stand safely, waiting for the police to arrive. . . ."

He reached out and patted Barteo on the shoulder, but Barteo was looking at Signora Lamonte.

So beautiful in her golden gown . . . so beautiful. . . .

THE END

The Boy From Glentarkie

continued from page 23

gasbag, the Reverend George Tocher, had laughed so long. The tongue-lashing he had received from Anne Ritchie had not been particularly funny. No one had addressed T.G.G. like that in years, if ever.

Who the hell does she think she is? he thought, passing the Falls of Tarkie place. I tried to help, didn't I? I acted without self-interest, didn't I? Yes, genuinely! All right, you desirable catamount, I'll pay you back for your arrogance. Catamount, he thought. I'm crazy. Anne is the most gentle-hearted person. My trouble is a whiff of that corruption that grows to a powerful absolute stink, thank you, Lord Acton.

Here was the T junction, and all the storms, the many arms of the one great storm, were here together. He stopped. He dipped his headlights. He got out. He did not have a hat or raincoat, both being at the Glentarkie Arms, where he was staying.

He saw the bicycle. He saw the wide tracks of a scooter, fresh tracks in mud, two tyre imprints at the curve. Two only? Yes.

HE was a most able man, a poker player par excellence, a caller of the bluff of lesser men. He knew this about himself, without conceit.

What had put him high above the run of successful men was not ability or a gambler's nerve or personality. What had taken him through three fortunes, with a war between, and had brought him now at the tender age of thirty-eight to a virtually unassailable sureness of position, was that little something hardly anyone else had got—the intangible, the small inward voice that was often wrong, the hunches the master gambler played.

A hunch had spoken in him at the manse. It was an unwelcome hunch, now proved correct: trouble for the Ritchie family, his young acquaintance Colin, his old friend Anne. Pretty anomalous, thought Tom Gillies, whose head was the urbane master of his heart. Pretty anomalous to fall hook, line and so on for the oldest friend you have in the world.

He had these extravagant fancies, alien to the usual him, as he drove up and over the narrow hump of the Roman Bridge, and then was climbing in second gear.

The hill gate swung down to open and up to shut. It swung wildly down and half-way up and down again, a toy of the wind at this first crest—but not one wind, for a kettle of storms was boiling here. He waited for a westerly gust to pin the gate open. He raced up through, not quickly enough. The east wind swung it back, metallic crashes and splintering sounds, smack on the backside.

He did not know which had come off worse—the ramshackle old gate or

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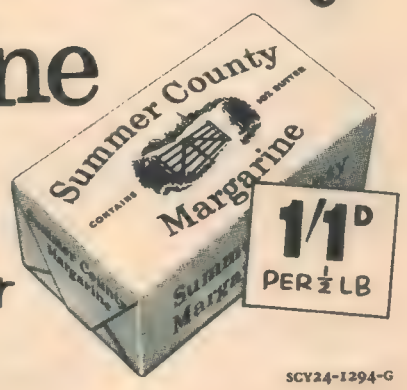

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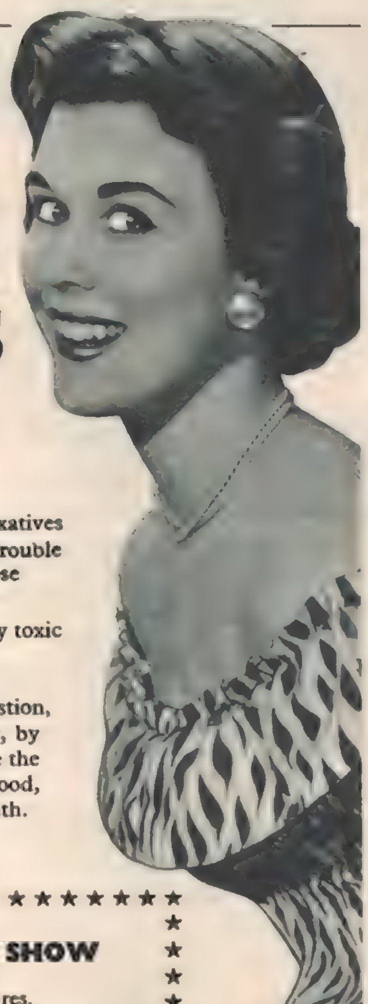

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his hireling car. But the car ran on, and now he was out on the open hill, and now the full blast of wind and water.

He liked it. He always had liked storms. He was small and invincible in the storm. He was Thomas Grant Gillies, Tam or Tom, without fear or favour or privilege, pitting himself against the storm, "Haa!" he shouted. "Here I come." Mad as a hatter, plain storm-crazy, original man.

He watched for a light. He saw no light but the lights of the storm. He did not think Anne could be far ahead. She had crossed the bridge after the rain began.

His storm fever left him altogether. He tried to remember. The Peaty Burn, the one where Colin had caught three trout—now the Peaty ran down from the western hills, a small stream in a gullied bed, he remembered. It ran down to join the Rum Burn half a mile or so below Loch Rum.

The confluence of the two went north into Glentarkie. That was clear in his mind. What he could not remember was where this hill road crossed the Peaty Burn. Also, he had a vague recollection of a footbridge, over the Rum Burn, was it, and just above the confluence? He could not be sure.

He had climbed a thousand feet or more. The wind and the rain still grew. The lightning stabbed everywhere, round about him and overhead. The thunder was everywhere, skittering lightly across the sky, ripping the sky with a great ripsaw, hammering down with a giant hammer.

He caught up with Anne Ritchie at the Peaty Burn. He could not see the bridge. He saw the road dip into the flood and rise out beyond. He saw her drop the scooter, let it fall on its side with one wheel spinning. She ran for the submerged bridge. He blasted the horn.

"No!" he shouted beside her in the rain. "You'll never get over."

"I've got to get over." She wore an oilskin and a sou'wester, red. "He's up there, I think. He must be up there."

"How much water on the bridge?" How much water under and on the bridge since she was ten and I was twelve?

She was calm and unafraid. She used to be terrified of thunder. "A foot about, I think," she said, or called in his ear, for the storm was loud, and the brown spate of the Peaty Burn was silent. "Let's try in the car."

She ran to sit in the left-hand seat. He would have gone alone, but she knew the hill, and he did not. He remembered a snippet here and there. He could see Loch Rum on a sunlit day in June. The rest he remembered when he saw it; but what the hell was the good of that?

"Hang on!" He went fast. The tail of the car slewed left in the flood, but they were through and up. The engine petered out, no sign of a kick. "Plugs," he said.

"The car's no use to us anyway. He was fishing above the junction. We must follow the Peaty to the Rum."

"Colin's probably home long ago."

"I know. But we can't be sure." She turned to look squarely at him. "Thank you for coming, Tam," she said, heaved at the door, and got out.

They followed the burn downstream. It was not far, a part of a mile, a pleasant stroll on a summer's day by the clear brown pools of the Peaty Burn. There were no pools now. The Peaty stormed to its junction with the Rum.

They went by heather hillock and boggy dip. The hill was wet underfoot in any weather, but there were no bad bogs up here, a thing that he remembered, that anyone would remember, because there was one bad bog only on Glentarkie moor.

That was the Green Bog. It drowned many sheep and deer. It had also drowned men. The bad Green Bog was in Anne Ritchie's mind and his.

She was stuck to the knees in a lesser bog. She hauled at his hands, and he hauled her out. She's remarkably strong for a woman, he thought. This thought of his seemed remarkably wise, but then he had a wise and more important thought: that there were other dangers besides the bad Green Bog—there were peat-hags; there were cliffs; there were many pitfalls into which a storm-lost boy might wander, might rush in panic.

Tom Gillies had been lost himself; he knew about it. And he knew that one injured boy would be one needle in this darkened haystack. The needle in the haystack, the camel in the needle's eye, the camel in the haystack; T. Grant Gillies in Glentarkie haystack.

Then the hail started, and he had no space left for thoughts about anything but the hail which battered his head, the size of walnuts. He laid his two forearms back on his bare defenceless head. She did likewise on the sou'wester.

They blundered and floundered on. The hail stopped as they reached the junction of the burns. What a blessing no hail could be! It rained again. The thunder had dropped a few decibels. The lightning was vivid, but less white-cold violet and lilac; now the next hiss is going to be for me, but I won't hear that one hiss, I guess.

The storm was easing. This was a miracle. This was the miracle of a less awful toothache, fever, storm, or what-have-you grievous thing.

"Washed-out," she said, meaning the footbridge he had not been able to place on his fuzzy map from long ago. It had spanned the Rum Burn above the junction. All that remained of it was a stanchion or anchoring pole on the far bank of the Rum, which was not now a burn of footbridge dimensions, but a river torrent.

Three, four, five inches of rain there might have been in this last hour.

She did not speak. She held up a brown trout, a tiddler of four or five ounces. Many brown trout would be dead this evening; but it was unlikely that any of those dead trout would have a wiry twig of heather threaded in through one gill and out through the mouth as a carrying stick.

He saw the shocked stillness in her face. How beautiful was a face more beautiful in shock and tempest, wet!

Tom Gillies had caught up on memory. He saw the map exact and complete. Colin had started from the loch, fishing the west bank of the Rum Burn down, lost in his fishing as only a fishing boy could be. The storm had

MARRIAGE—3

When one is wise, two are happy.

English proverb

arrived full strength. By the time he reached here, the Peaty Burn had been in spate.

It was not a loch-fed burn. It flooded directly from the hills, flash-flooded was the word, from ankle-deep stream to impassable spate. Colin had dropped his single trout, needing a hand to spare. He had crossed the Rum by the footbridge, and had followed the east bank down for home, the forbidden bank where the Green Bog lay.

The lights of the storm were fading. The light of day was coming back, a dawn of a sort at 9.20 p.m. The Rum Burn roared.

She looked at the flood, then down the other bank, and back at the flood and down again.

She cupped her hands. "Colin! Colin!"

"Colin!" he called.

The thunder, the water. No child's voice answered.

"There aren't any bridges lower down. What now, Tam?" Tam, Tam, the bulldozer man. Help me, Tam. "Can we jump it?"

A standing jump of what? Of fifteen feet, at least. Not a hope. "Go up to the loch, and across, and down."

"Come on!" She ran, stripping off oilskin and sou'wester.

Tom Gillies took exercise daily. He was as lean at thirty-eight as he had

"The fellow in the other car has been asking after you. He wants to punch you on the nose"

been at college. But he was not in condition for running up the rocky, marshy, heather-tangled hills of his native land. It had been a humbling thing about his childhood with Anne Kintair, he now remembered—that she could beat him on a long climb.

Two things—first the casting of a fly, second the climbing of a hill. He was stronger; he could set a better snare; he gutted rabbits without a qualm; he was not afraid of thunder. They had been caught once, half-way up Ben Rum. He could see her under the ledge of rock with her thumbs in her ears and her fingers pressed tightly into her eyes, shutting away the horrors of sound and sight.

She still can run, he thought, his lungs, his legs, the stitch in his right side below the ribs, his heart. She isn't terrified of thunder now, he thought. She's afraid of the bad Green Bog.

Carlotta! He thought also. Leave Señor Martinez, the croupier. He's through my million now. Leave him and take to the hills like a stag, like a red-deer hind, my dear Carlotta. *"I'm bored with marriage to an I.B.M. machine. Quite frankly, Tom, I'm bored."*

I'm bored. I'm bored. I'm bored, he thought, in time to the slip, the sonck, the pound of his feet. *Quite frankly*, she always said, the least frank lady of his acquaintance, his something-something of a quondam wife. I'm bored. I'm bored with the I.B.M. I'm bored, quite frankly, yes.

Anne Ritchie waited for him at the loch. The bridge at the spillway held.

He saw Loch Rum for the first time now again.

"Rest a moment, Tam," she panted.

He rested. His breath came back. His heart slowed down. I must be in fairly good shape, he thought beside Loch Rum, of which he was now the owner. The sky was clearing beyond Ben Rum; his too, three thousand four hundred and eighteen feet.

"Okay," he said, turning away from the loch and the hill. These were the things he had remembered, these and a friend with a golden mop.

The friend had changed; the golden hair was again a mop. She loved her husband, he thought, going down the east bank of the burn. But I never loved a woman. I wanted Carlotta, oh, sure, who didn't? I loaded Carlotta with diamond rocks. Quite frankly, Carlotta soon was bored. Quite frankly, so was I.

"All you love is a balance sheet," so said Carlotta. *"And all you love, Carlotta dear, is to squander the profits in it,"* so said I, a smart riposte.

These were the wayward thoughts of extreme effort. The real thought that nagged at his mind and spurred his body was not a thought. It was a fear, a fear for her boy in the bad Green Bog.

Treacherous bogs were nothing unusual. The Highlands were pitted with them. There were two bad things about the bad Green Bog. A stranger, walking down the right bank of the Rum, would scramble by hollow and hillock, rough going, with the balance of gravity in his favour—a few easy stretches, and a few stretches where the Rum had cut deep in the floods of the aeons since these hills had stood in order.

The deepest of such rock-gouges or ravines went square through a hundred feet of hill. The stranger would climb that hill, beside and above the ravine and the burn. He would halt at the top, and would look into the fair Glen of Tarkie. Not far to go now, a green patch just below him, a lesser hillock to climb again, soon the dry stone wall, and then the shelter of the glen. The unwary stranger would stride down to be up to his neck, or worse, in trouble.

But the stranger who knew these fierce and gentle hills would look once at the strip of emerald green, so innocent and pretty amid the sombre shades. Not me, he would say to himself. And he would do one of two things: if the burn was low, he would cross to the other bank. If not, he would follow this hillside to the east a hundred yards or so till he looked down at the neck, a narrowing in the bad Green Bog.

This neck was a less vivid green, marked by wooden poles and planked. Safe enough, he would say to himself, and so it was.

Or a particularly cautious man might elect to walk the extra distance to the east, and round the far end of the bog.

Thus, the first bad thing was no danger to local or general knowledge.

The second bad thing was that, in high floods, the Green Bog became a backwater of the Rum. When the Rum climbed high enough, it filled the Green Bog like a bucket. This also was local knowledge, but known only to the most knowledgeable locals, shepherds, stalkers and the like.

He saw the bodies of two sheep, a black-faced ewe and a lamb, go past. The burn was so high that the water did not break or tumble. It rolled, cresting and dipping, peat-dark and wicked. And he thought, as he had often thought at the release of great waters he had harnessed in America—but it was here too in this unbridled flood, and stronger here, for this flood did not defer to man.

He thought of Power. He loved the positive power of river in flood. He hated the negative power of bad Green Bog.

He had not asked her whether Colin knew of the danger of that short-cut home when the Rum Burn was in spate. He knew the answer. If she had known that Colin knew, she would not be running so urgently now, her

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cotton dress wet-moulded to her body, her legs peat-mudded to the knees, her brown face flushed, her hair awry.

He stumbled. She caught him by the collar of his suit; he weaved in the steam of his dark grey suit. The sun struck in now, sparkling the hill, casting long shadows to the sun-blacked storm. The storms were almost gone. The lightning bothered other animals and people. The thunder grumbled in *diminuendo*.

Here was the last ravine but one, cut through the last hill but one. They climbed that hill. He was going better, into a second wind. Half a mile up and half a mile down, not so far for a man and a woman to scramble.

Go on, Carlotta, get up that hill. It takes all kinds, you know, he thought. It takes Carlotta on her divan. Or it takes the virile horsy ladies. But it doesn't take kinds. It takes one particularly womanly woman who meets me with fire and gentleness.

Now the crest, a drop, then the deep ravine, the hundred-foot hill—beyond that the bad Green Bog. How can we know, he thought. Sucked under and held? Gone the long way round and safely home? Which or what else?

THE rainbow curved into that last hollow. No rainbow. Then, of a sudden, a rainbow. He saw the end of it too, jazzy colours on lichened rock. They say that buried treasure lies below the rainbow's end. Drill deep, tamp in the sticks, wire up the caps, go a safe distance, give her the spark, and up she goes. Here is my legend, and here my treasure. Here are my billions.

"Listen!" Her left hand was on his shoulder. He looked at her brown left hand with her husband's gold ring on the third finger, an artist's hand, strong, work-roughened, slim, not the willowy hand of the nylon ads.

Her hand gripped tightly at his shoulder. He watched her hand while he listened to this:

"'. . . Davy, Davy Crockett, King of the wild frontier!'"

It came from beyond the grassy hollow, from beyond the crest of the next small hill. It came through the rush of the Rum in spate. It came in a child's pure wavering treble in a Scottish accent. It put Tom's years as a boy, a youth, a man, all things together and all explained, the legends of here and the legends of there, of all man's frontiers everywhere.

Tremors of beauty touched his spine. Colin Ritchie's mother wept. Anne Ritchie wept, the woman he loved. Annie sobbed, his childhood friend.

"Born on a mountain-top in Tennessee. . . ."

"He's starting again. He wrote the verses down. He knows them all. Oh, what an idiot I am!"

He put his hand on her hand on his shoulder. Then he moved her hand away. He ran downhill and up the other slope and down to the crossing place in the bad Green Bog, the narrow neck where the poles were now partly submerged.

Colin clung to the top of a pole two-thirds of the way across. He embraced the pole and his fishing rod.

"I started to cross," he said, teeth chattering, "in the hail and everything, but I could see all right and it wasn't a bit hard going along the planks from pole to pole.

"And then suddenly the water came up like a great huge bath, or something, in a jiffy, so all I could pretty well do was hang on, and it came higher and higher, and I was pretty well absolutely scared stiff until it didn't rise any more, but it was jolly cold.

"And then I thought of Davy Crockett to warm me up, and I thought you and Mummy would be coming sometime, and I thought you might hear me. Did you?"

"We did," he said. "You're lucky, Colin. Don't ever do that again."

"I don't expect I'll have any chances. . . ."

"I had forgotten," Tom Gillies said. He had. But he forgot that too again for the moment because there was a problem to be dealt with. *First things first* was apt to be breaking the horizon as a dictum of the dynamic T.G.G.

The Rum Burn and the Green Bog rose no more; but the burn would drop much faster than the bog, which had lost its siren prettiness and now resembled a scummy pond.

"Hang on," he said. "I'll come round and get you from that side."

Anne Ritchie had not arrived. He looked up. She was coming slowly over the hill. He waved his arm to show that he would skirt the far end of the bog, which he did. It was a tiresome walk.

They waited for him. Colin shivered at his pole. Anne sat with her chin against her knees, arms round her knees, with her thoughts, whatever they might be.

Neither spoke.

"When I get near enough," he said, "stretch out your hand. Don't try to grip mine. Let me get a hold of your wrist. Don't hurry. Do what I tell you."

"Okay, Tam."

"Please be careful, Tam," she said.

What does she think I'm going to be? he thought irritably. He knew that if a foot slipped off those planks, it would be awkward.

His feet did not slip. He had the boy out in a couple of minutes, and carried him to safety. The sun was setting beyond Glentarkie. The grouse were calling. The world was clean and cool and sharp. Tom Gillies was tired.

"Why on earth didn't you start down earlier, darling?" All's well. Maternal post mortem.

"I didn't even notice except thunder miles and miles away, and I only caught one but lots of offers, until suddenly it was black and everything all happened at once, and then I couldn't get over the Peaty Burn, and then I thought of hiding under a rock, and then I thought you'd be sure to fuss worse. . . ."

"Oh, you're all the same—explain, explain, reasons and excuses."

Colin, a stout small boy, began to cry. "You didn't jolly well get caught in the Green Bog," he sobbed, bedraggled and forlorn.

"I know who did," Tom Gillies said. "Old Davy Crockett." He had none of his own, but he had some clues to what made them tick. As for the fair strong sex, their clockwork was a mystery to him.

"That's exactly what I mean—'killed himself a barr when he was only three.' Vanity, vanity, sacred male vanity, such vainglorious roosters, that's what you all are, getting the world in trouble." Anne Ritchie began to laugh.

"That'll be quite enough of that," he shouted at her across the neck of the bad Green Bog. "Behave yourself!" he rasped in much the same tone he had employed to Darrell Armitage some hours ago across the Atlantic.

SHE stopped laughing. "Run all the way home, Colin," she said quietly, "and get into the bath as hot as you can stand it, and wait there till I come. As for you," she continued as quietly to Tom Gillies, "it's all your fault." She stared at him, turned, and walked off uphill.

"Gosh!" said Colin. "What's wrong with Mummy? I've never even seen her cross till you came here. I didn't know she could be. An' besides, what's all your fault?"

"Your mother was worried," he said to his small staunch ally. Things were too complicated for explanation, and the boy was as wet as a newly caught trout, and Tom Gillies himself was in a hurry. "Run, pardner!" he said. "Get going!"

He pursued. She was limping. He caught up with her in the gloaming at Loch Rum. "What's the trouble, Anne?" he asked her.

"If you mean my foot, a blister," she said. "A fiendish one."

"It is my fault, I guess," he said. He could hear trout rising all over the loch. He could see the rings, widening out and out and out, following one another into nothing. That's it, he thought, vague about what he meant. "I'm sorry," he said.

"Oh no, Tam, it's me. I was so awful. I didn't mean. . . ."

"We have to be human, don't we?" he said. "Ah, look! The deer are moving." They watched deer string from a corrie on Ben Rum.

They crossed the bridge and went on down the other side of the Rum Burn, which was falling.

"Yes," she said. "We do. But it's quite a shock finding that little item out again. And then to be perfectly horrible to an old friend, absolutely my oldest friend, who had done a wonderfully generous thing. . . ."

"For my private satisfaction, too," Tom Gillies said. "All that you said this evening was beginning to be right about me. Generous? On my own terms, yes. Patronizing? I didn't mean that you should know. But you're not the only one who was out of practice about being human."

Shall I? he thought. Dare I put out my hand to touch the soft skin above the damp shoulder of her dress.

BUT he did not do that. He followed her down to get her red oilskin and sou'wester, and then they turned up the Peaty Burn. His hired car, slightly bashed in the backside, would require plug-drying, he expected.

Shall I say it?

"It's up to you," he said with a business-like edge, "whether you pay back my money or not. If you don't, I shall sell Glentarkie to the first bidder."

She stopped. She stood perfectly still. "What?" she said.

He repeated his two sentences verbatim. He had worked them out with care.

She turned to stare at him.

"Oh, Tam," she said. "You can't mean that."

He watched her breathing, up and in, and down and out. He wanted her.

"Didn't you mean what you said?" she asked him.

"What about?" And whereabout was the poker-face of T.G.G.?

"About possession of me, bulldozer man."

But old friends and lovers share alike. They laughed together and were quiet on the hill. They walked again. The sunset was bright beyond Glentarkie. . . .

"I take my text," the minister boomed, "from the book of Micah, chapter six, at verse eight: '. . . . And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

"My brethren, on this peaceful Sabbath morn. . . ."

Tom Gillies sat on one side of the old Laird's daughter. The old Laird's grandson sat on her other side in the Glentarkie pew. Nobody the worse for a rough outing.

"The fierce wrath of the Lord. . . ." boomed the minister about the storm, it being much in the minds of his weather-haunted flock. Boom-boom, that famous Presbyterian boom.

Colin fidgeted beyond her. Anne sat still. Tom put a hand on the edge of the bare wooden seat of the Glentarkie pew.

He kept it there patiently, humbly, until the side of her hand rewarded him. In the new and in the old, in the small and in the great is the wealth of love.

"Thirty-one and three-quarters by my watch," said Colin later. "A bit thick, I must say, don't you think so, Tam?"

"Best sermon I never heard," Tom Gillies said.

Anne smiled. Life here? Life there? Life anywhere.

THE END

Spot the Lawbreaker

Somewhere in this scene, the law is being broken. Can you see where? A barrister gives the answer on page 50

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The Long Walk

Continued from page 11

together for an anxious conference. They were obviously very worried. They talked, their backs to the wind, for a few minutes and then a signalman climbed precariously up one of the telephone poles and plugged in with a portable handset. He came down and reported. There were nods of rather taut approval and the officer group broke up to their various emergency duties. We stood around while a small patrol of troops struck off along the road ahead to reconnoitre for a sheltered place.

About half an hour after the breakdown the chains were unhooked from the lorries and the prisoners unshackled. We marched off ahead, crunching into the fresh snow, laboriously beating out a track.

The lorries crept after us. We struggled on for a mile until we came to the haven of a belt of woods. Somehow we got the fires going, hundreds of them, and all through the raging night tended them for our lives.

Prisoners dourly struggled and inched their way in towards the inner ring around the blazing timber. Some fools warmed their numbed hands close to the flames and then shrieked with the agony of returning circulation, beating their arms about and contorting themselves with the fierce pangs of it. Within the range of the heat we kept turning ourselves about because the blizzard froze one's back even while the fire was giving out some little warmth to hands, face and the front of the body.

No one was allowed to sleep. Those in the inner ring who began to doze off were shaken roughly awake by their friends. To sleep, as we all knew, might mean no awakening.

I DO not remember just how long we stayed under the lee of woods. It seemed a long time, but at last the blizzard died and we heard men yipping and yelling in the distance. Then, suddenly, we saw them, and shouted in surprise and excitement. Reindeer! Reindeer and sledges! Dozens of them! Reindeer, two, three and even four to a sled in line ahead driven by little brown men, barely five feet tall, with smooth Mongoloid faces, the nomadic Ostyaks, the primitive herdsmen of the Siberian steppes.

The novelty was like a tonic. Men came out of their discomfort and apathy with shouting and laughter. Near me was a man who jumped up and down and kept saying over and over again: "Well, I'm damned. Look at that lot." New faces, new sights, new sounds. The cries of the Ostyaks, the unharnessing of the reindeer—all these activities absorbed our interest.

The little men had brought food with them in small sacks and they joined us round the fire as we received our morning issue of bread and coffee. They wore warm skin clothing. They looked at us with pity, their sharp, twinkling eyes puckered into slits as is the manner of men who spend their lives facing the hazards of the world's worst weather.

I had a long talk with one of them in Russian, an old man of about sixty. He called us, as did all the Ostyaks, the Unfortunates.

Traditionally, from the time of the Tsars we were, to his people, the Unfortunates, the prisoners of a régime which always sought to wrest the riches of Siberia by the use of unpaid labourers, the political prisoners who could not fit in the framework of successive tyrannies.

"Since a long time ago, before me and my father and his father before him, we placed outside our dwellings at night food for the wandering Unfortunates who had fled from their camps and knew not where to go. In my time, too, because I am becoming an old man, I remember the placing of food."

"These men like us," I said, "have they always tried to escape?"

"Always men who are young and strong and hate slavery have tried to escape," said the Ostyak. "Perhaps you will try to escape, I think."

Escape. I turned the word over in my mind. Yes, I thought, all men who are young and strong and do not want to die must think of escape. But only a madman could entertain any serious hopes of a break on this wintry trek of the north. There could only be death in attempting to live off this country in winter, weak and half-starved as we already were. Nevertheless, the old reindeer man left me with one thought I was to cherish later: men did attempt to escape.

We moved off again, our chains now fastened to the sledges. The fantastic procession wound its way onwards for more than a week, mostly through open country.

ON the eighth or ninth day after leaving the lorries we entered a vast forest. We noticed that the soldiers were showing some signs of cheerfulness and guessed that we must be near the end of the journey. After two days in the forest we emerged at dusk into a big, man-made clearing. There were lights ahead and voices calling. This was our destination—Camp Number 303, which I estimate to have been between two hundred and three hundred miles south-west of Yakutsk.

I do not remember in any sharp detail the scenes of arrival that night in the first week of February, 1941. I remember being freed of my chains, the odd feeling of security as I stamped about inside the compound, the meal enhanced by turnip-water "soup," the lighting of fires on what appeared to be a big parade-ground, the hearing of my name called in the checking of the lists. Sitting shoulder to shoulder with Grechinen round a crackling pile of logs, I talked a little, dozed often, stood up to ease the pain in my aching legs. More than a thousand miles of marching from Irkutsk and we had got there. I found myself marvelling. In spite of my physical misery I was almost happy. Nothing the next day could bring could be worse.

Aching, heavy-eyed and weary, we were astir, by habit, at dawn. The first day of my life in a Soviet labour camp was before me.

Camp 303 was a rectangular enclosure about half a mile long and about four hundred yards broad, at each corner of which stood a guard tower manned by machine-gun crews. The main gate, around which were built the troops' quarters, the kitchens, storehouses and administrative huts, faced west in one of the shorter sides of the oblong. Roughly across the centre of the enclosure was an open strip of ground which served as no-man's-land between the soldiers and the prisoners.

Between us and the surrounding forest were the typical defences of a

Spot the Lawbreaker

See page 49

FOR more than a hundred years, it has been an offence to shake carpets, rags or mats in the street. But the housewife in the sketch would not have broken the law if she had shaken her front door mat before 8 a.m., says a barrister-at-law. The law varies slightly between London and the provinces. Londoners are liable to a maximum fine of £2; in the provinces an offender may be arrested on the spot by a policeman and fined £2 or sent to prison for fourteen days.

"Well, fancy that! The shop down the road is having a sale of these things"

prison camp. Looking from the inside, the first barrier to freedom was an unbroken ring of coiled barbed wire, behind which was a six-feet deep dry moat. Then came two twelve-feet high log palisades presenting a smooth surface inwards but strongly buttressed on the far side. The outer sides of both wooden walls were protected by rolled barbed wire. The space between the two provided a well-beaten track giving access from the main-gate guardroom to all four control towers, and was regularly patrolled by armed sentries accompanied at night by guard dogs.

Mingling diffidently with us that first morning were about a thousand men, many of them Finns, who were already installed when our bedraggled crowd of about 4,500 arrived. They came from four big huts at the eastern end of the compound. It was quite obvious that there was no accommodation for us.

Speculation was cut short by orders to line ourselves up for food, the usual issue of ersatz coffee and bread. Then into the middle of the parade-ground came some soldiers carrying a wooden platform. Around it they formed a ring. We prisoners were then hustled to form ourselves in a big circle around the troops, facing inwards towards the platform. Accompanied by a small armed guard, two Russian colonels walked to the foot of the platform. One of them stepped up.

From my place in the front row I eyed him closely. He was tall, slim and distinguished looking, his hair greying at the temples, a typical example of a professional soldier in any army. I was struck by his air of detachment, that indefinable quality of effortless authority that any man who has served in armed forces will have met in professional commanders. He was facing a hostile audience, a mob of ill-treated humans whose bitter hate of all things Russian was almost a tangible thing, but he gave no sign. He turned his head slowly to look at us all. There was perfect silence.

He spoke clearly and crisply in Russian. "I am Colonel Ushakov," he said. "I am commandant of this camp. You have come here to work and I expect from you hard work and discipline. Your first task will be to build barracks for yourselves. How quickly you get inside out of the weather depends on your own efforts. It is up to you. In all communities there are those who will let others do the work for them. That kind of slacking will not be tolerated here."

When he stepped down the other colonel took his place. He did not step up so much as leap forward in eagerness. If there was a sense of restrained authority about Ushakov, this fellow wore his power like a flaunting banner.

If I ever knew his name, I do not remember it. He was the political officer and we never called him anything but The Politruk. He stood for fully a minute just looking at us, faintly smiling, eminently sure of himself, a picture of well-being and arrogance. The men stirred uneasily.

"Look at you!" he said, hunching his shoulders and placing his gloved hands on his hips. "You look like a bunch of animals. Just look at yourselves! You are supposed to be the highly civilized people who fancy they can run the world. Can't you now appreciate what stupid nonsense you have been taught?"

Fortified by his anonymity in the restless crowd, one brave man answered back. "How can we look any different? You won't let us shave, there's no soap and no clean clothes."

The Politruk turned in the direction of the voice. "I'll get your food ration stopped if I am interrupted again." He was not interrupted again.

"After a time here," he went on, "and under the guidance of Comrade Stalin, we shall make useful citizens of you. Those who don't work don't eat. It is my job to help you to improve yourselves. You can attend classes to correct your way of thinking. We have an excellent library for use after work."

There was some more in the same vein, and then the meeting ended.

We finished building our huts a fortnight after our arrival. I well remember the wonderful feeling of shelter and warmth, protection and comfort I felt when I first came out of the chilling night into my new home.

The air smelt deliciously of fresh-cut pine. Down each long side wall of heavy timbers were a hundred and fifty bunks made of planks. Following the example of those already installed in their huts we had brought in as much moss as we could carry in our *fufaikas* to spread on the hard boards of our beds.

Three square, sheet-iron stoves blazed red into the gloom, fuelled by short pieces of sawn log, of which a supply was brought in daily by the forest working parties. There were no chimneys for the stoves; the smoke issued from a short length of stackpipe and curled away through vents in the roof. The smell of wood smoke mingled with the scent of the pine.

By the end of the first month the camp had settled into a disciplined rhythm of life and there was a general feeling that, harsh though existence was in this remote, winter-bound spot, conditions could have been much worse. All working prisoners were given four hundred grammes of bread (about fourteen ounces) a day and those too sick to work received three hundred grammes. There was an occasional treat on Sunday when we were given dried fish, but bread remained the most important single factor in our lives. Tobacco, too, was important in a lesser

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[NCT 90]

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Anadin's balanced formula contains *four* different ingredients which work together to relieve the miseries of colds and 'flu; taken in time they will usually stop them right at the start. Here are the reasons why 'Anadin' relieves colds and 'flu so fast.

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IMMEDIATE RELIEF. First to act is the pure aspirin. Its quick acting power makes the 'nerve exchange' less sensitive.

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SENSE OF WELL-BEING. Pain nearly always brings depression and a 'low feeling'. But 'Anadin' includes Caffeine with a balancing trace of Quinine to exert a 'tonic' effect and induce an immediate feeling of well-being.

For colds, 'flu and every kind of pain, take 'Anadin'.

Nothing acts faster than **ANADIN** Trade Mark

At all Chemists, 1/10d. and 3/8d.

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See improvement in 24 hrs with new healing balm

Why put up with spotty skin, eczema, rashes? A new healing balm containing *two* antiseptics could end these troubles for you — quickly!

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This completes a new kind of healing.

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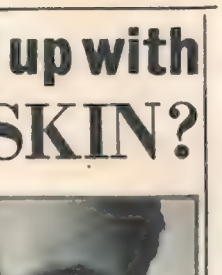

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degree. There was a fairly generous issue once a week of the coarse *korizhki*, with a sheet of old newspaper to act as cigarette paper.

The Russians interfered very little with our lives outside working hours. Inspection of our quarters was infrequent and perfunctory. Prisoners working in felling teams found new friends and at first sought permission to change from one hut to another to bunk near their team-mates. The authorities offered no objection and most men could be persuaded to switch from one hut to another by a bribe of tobacco, so there was, therefore, a constant movement in those early weeks as men sorted out themselves and their friends.

I used to lie on my bunk in the long evenings looking up to the smoke vent twenty feet above me and thinking about it all. There would be men talking quietly, some of them visitors from other huts. Words and disconnected sentences would reach me . . . names of places, and prisons and army regiments. . . . "She said: 'Darling, don't worry, it will all be over soon, and I will still be here. . . .'" A snippet of conversation about somebody who got his ribs bruised. "He's doing all right for himself—light duties cleaning out the officers' mess and plenty of tobacco, waiting to be picked up. . . ." It would flow around me, a half-noticed background to my own thoughts.

My mind revolved them, these crowding impressions. And then, unfailingly, until I dropped off to sleep on the moss-covered planks, I would grapple with my own problem. The insistent, hammering thought always was: twenty-five years in this place. Many of these men I now knew would die as the years passed. There would be fresh entries. And I would get older and older. Twenty-five years. Twenty-five years. As long to go as I had already lived. But how to get out? And having beaten the wire, the moat and the formidable wooden fences, where would one escape to?

No man could ever hope to fight his way out alone against the crushing hazards of this country with its immense distances. Where, having planned an escape, could one find resolute men to make the attempt? These, and other questions, I put to myself. And I had no answers.

We worked hard for six days and had an easy day on the seventh. Sunday was the day when the commandant addressed the prisoners. He would talk of the work target for the following week, and draw attention to any infringements of camp rules.

We had been there a month when the commandant called for volunteers for a new job. He wanted men with experience of making skis. There was no response at first. Said the commandant: "Volunteers will receive an immediate increase of one hundred grammes on their daily bread ration, and there will be more if the skis turned out are of good quality." Sixty men volunteered, and I was one of them.

At the end of our first week's work Ushakov came to the ski-shop and announced that samples sent to Yakutsk had been accepted for the Red Army. Our bread ration would go up immediately to a kilogramme a day—over double the normal ration—and there would be more tobacco for us.

Working in the warmth of the ski-shop, with a big stove roaring all day for steaming the wood, I felt I was getting back towards my full strength again. It should have made me resigned to my sentence, but instead it turned my thoughts more and more to escape. I began to wonder how I could preserve and hide some of my extra bread.

One cold blustery Sunday morning in mid-March we were ordered out to attend the colonel's weekly parade. "In my quarters," said Ushakov, "I have a radio set. It is called a Telefunken. Is there any one of you who knows this make of set well enough to do a repair job?"

I knew the set, but could I repair it? If I could, there was the exciting prospect of hearing some news from the outside world. I stuck up my hand and called out. An n.c.o. stepped up and took my name. "I will send for you when I want you," said the commandant.

It was to be a fateful decision, launching me into the last and most extraordinary phase of my stay at Camp 303. In this isolated community of between five and six thousand men there was but one woman. The defective Telefunken was to be the means of my meeting her, and, so far as I knew, I was the only prisoner who ever talked to her.

The following afternoon, as I worked in the ski-shop, the commandant's messenger, a moon-faced private named Igor, called for me. "The commandant wants you," he said. "Come with me."

The commandant's house was like all the other buildings, built of logs with the typical porch facing south to keep the wind and snow away from the front door.

Igor ushered me in. Ushakov stepped forward towards the door, dismissed Igor and motioned me in.

His wife sat in front of a stove, and the colonel murmured a conventional introduction. I bowed and she smiled with a small inclination of her head. I found myself staring at her. She was the first woman I had met since I left my wife and my mother in Pinsk. I felt awkward and ill at ease, painfully aware of my ugly clothes, my beard and my long hair which curled over the neck of my jacket.

She was a tall woman. She wore a long thick skirt and a dark woollen cardigan over a white, flower-embroidered cotton blouse. Her brown hair, tightly plaited and wound in the Russian style halo-wise around the head, had a live, well-brushed sheen, and I was struck by the clearness of her skin. I think she would have been nearing forty. She was not beautiful but she had that quiet quality of essential womanliness, a way of holding herself, an ease of moving that would demand attention anywhere. I came out of my fleeting trance to find her blue eyes regarding me in a look of frank pity and sympathy. I turned my head away and saw Ushakov standing in the doorway between the two rooms looking at me in that preoccupied and detached manner of his. "Let me show you the radio," he said.

The inner room was their bedroom and his office combined. On a bench under a portrait of Stalin was the radio, a brand-new, battery-operated Telefunken. I took the back off the set and began running my fingers along the leads, suspecting a loose connection somewhere. Hesitantly, I inquired where he had got the set. "I happened," he answered, "to be unfortunately in charge of troops in Poland in 1939, and I acquired it there."

My mind seized on the use of the word "unfortunately." It tied in with the theory which the prisoners expressed that even to be commandant of a camp in Siberia was in the nature of a punishment. I had the impression then, later to be strengthened, that Ushakov owed his appointment to Siberia to some indiscretion during the Polish campaign.

He went back to the fire and sat down on the polished bench. I worked on, unhurriedly checking the circuit. After about half an hour he called me to the fire, while his wife poured out two mugs of tea. The colonel drank first and then gave his mug to me. I went back to the radio, and as I worked I thought that I was not going to rush this job, that this was my most pleasant experience since my arrest and that I must do everything to make it last. When Igor came to collect me, I explained that checking all the leads and valves was a slow business. "Very well," said Ushakov, "I will send for you again."

Igor fetched me again the next day. As I fiddled with the set, the colonel and his wife talked to me. Ushakova was interested in my family, at the fluency of my Russian.

"You have twenty-five years, haven't you?" said the colonel.

"Yes."

There was a pause and then his wife spoke again. "Twenty-five years is a long time. How old are you?" I told her that I was twenty-five.

The three-cornered conversation was interspersed with odd silences. Surprisingly, Ushakov asked me if I thought Russia would be involved in another war. He was looking up at the roof, his face expressionless.

"In Poland," I said, "it was common knowledge that Goering came to us for a corridor through which the Germans could attack Russia. Germany is ready and the attack is inevitable." I gabbled it out fast. I expected to be told I was talking too much. But neither Ushakov nor his wife made any comment.

It occurred to me that they did not seem very anxious to hurry the repair of the radio. I had found what I believed to be the fault, a loose battery lead. But I just did not want to put the back on the set, connect up and switch on. I thought my visits must then end.

Two days went by before I was summoned again. On this third visit I started straightway to get the Telefunken working. Ushakov was busy at his desk and his wife did the talking. As she talked I switched on. The radio hummed into life and I turned the dials. Ushakov came over beside me. We heard a concert from Moscow. I went from station to station, picking up fragments of news.

Ushakov gave me a whole packet of

korizhki tobacco and a sheet of old newspaper. As Igor stood waiting to escort me away, he said: "If the set needs any attention, I will send for you again. I am afraid we do not understand how to work it very well."

It was now nearing the end of March. I worked uninterruptedly for several days in the ski-shop and began regretfully to think that the Telefunken episode was over. Just about that time I came to know a remarkable man named Anastazi Kolemenos. He was one of the finest physical specimens I have ever seen, more than six feet tall, blond-haired and blond-bearded, with curious grey-green eyes. He was a kind and helpful giant of a man, whose job was to carry the birch logs and split them for use in the ski-shop. I marked him down as a likely companion for escape.

Over the clatter of workshop activity they called out to me. "Your friend has called for you again." Igor stood stolidly inside the door and beckoned. I put down a ski I was testing, dusted myself down and walked out with him.

Ushakov told me the set was not working as well as it did. I tested it and it seemed to function, although the signal strength was down a little. I said he would be advised to get spare batteries. He said he would arrange that. He put on his greatcoat, murmured something to his wife about having to attend an officers' meeting and went out.

"I will make some tea for you," she smiled. "You can find me a station with some good music."

I found her the kind of music she wanted and she talked about herself with a symphony orchestra as the background. She talked to draw me out, to get me to tell her about myself. It was as though she were saying: "This is me, this is my life. You can trust me." I didn't quite know why this was happening to me. I said to myself that in spite of Ushakov's exalted position here, he and his wife were really exiles. She, especially, was almost as much a prisoner as I was.

We sipped hot tea and she kept her voice low. This was the story she told me. Her family had been army officers for generations before the Revolution. Her father had been shot by the Bolsheviks. Her young cadet brother died of wounds received in the defence of the Smolny Institute. Her mother had fled with her from their home near Nijni Novgorod and when, later, the mother died, she had adapted herself to the new order of life, got herself a work-card and found herself a job. She did well and earned a State holiday with other favoured workers at Yalta. And there she met Ushakov. I gathered that from then on he was the only man in her life.

ALL the time I was telling myself that she talked to me because I was a prisoner and she was sorry for me because she could not talk these kind of things to her own people. Yet, amid doubts, there was the conviction that this was an intelligent, sensitive and most compassionate woman, and this camp, which surrounded her with the evidence of cruelly wasted lives, had shocked her. Ushakova was a Russian, she believed passionately in the great destiny of Russia. But she was also a woman and I don't think she liked what she now had to see.

What made me talk about Ostyaks? I do not know. I think I was embarrassed at her complete acceptance of me and I seized on another topic to steer the conversation away from ourselves. "They used to put out food for the Unfortunates," I said.

It was then that Ushakova shocked me by asking if I was thinking of escape. I was too stunned, too bewildered by her question to give an answer. Even today, I wonder what I would have said had not Igor entered and made any answer impossible.

I turned to go, discomfited and miserable, like a man who has turned his head from the extended hand of a friend. She spoke coolly and formally. "You will come again if the set wants adjusting?" My words came in a rush. "Yes, yes, I shall be glad to."

I felt a glow of excitement as I waited through the next few days to see if I would get another call. I met a man named Sigmund Makowski, a thirty-seven year old captain in the Polish frontier forces. A precise, clear-thinking fellow, fit, active and bearing the stamp of the regular army officer. I marked him down, as I had marked Kolemenos, but I said nothing of my plans at this stage. I do not know what I expected of Ushakova, but at least I thought she would be in a position to advise.

Call for me she did, and when I had tuned in the radio, dallying round the dial to pick up some news items for my friends, she started casually enough to talk of the approaching short Siberian summer. I took the plunge. "I am sorry about the last time," I said. "Of course I do think of those things, but the distances are so great, the country so difficult and I have no equipment to face such a journey."

"You are only young," she answered. "You need not have been afraid to admit that you do not look forward to the next twenty-five years in these surroundings. It was something to talk about between us. I am reasonably well looked after here. We have comfortable quarters, much better food than yours and as many cigarettes as we need. But I couldn't spend twenty-five years here. So escape must be an idea close to your heart and it may do you good to tell me what you think."

So we talked of it as an abstract thing, as though it were being contemplated by some third person. We posed the question: supposing a man could get out of the camp, where could he head for? The only possibility for such a man, I thought, would be to dash due east the short six hundred miles to the coast, and from there find his way to Japan. The attempt would be a failure, in her opinion. The east coast was heavily guarded. Could he smuggle himself on to a westbound train, maybe find himself a job in the Ural mines and possibly make his way out of Russia later? There would be difficulties of travel and work-permits and other vital papers, she said.

That was all the exploring we did that day, and it was not until I lay thinking things over on my bunk that night that I realized the one escape route she appeared deliberately to have ignored—south, past Lake Baikal. Whence from there? Afghanistan was the name that popped into my mind. It sounded sufficiently neutral and obscure.

Later I spoke to Makowski. I walked him over to the latrines. "What would you think of an escape?"

"Don't be crazy, man. We have nothing to escape with, even if we got outside the camp."

"I might get a little help."

"If you can, I'm with you. To hell with this place!"

Ushakova appeared to be actively enjoying her rôle as conspirator-in-chief. I have been unable to decide whether she ever believed I would really attempt an escape. It might be that all this was an intriguing exercise for the sharp wits of a woman bored by depressing camp life. Some things, even at this distance of time, I cannot answer.

The business had emerged from the abstract. This was Ushakova planning away as the radio gave us one of her

MARRIAGE—4

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favourite Tchaikovsky symphonies. "You will want a small number of the fittest and most enterprising men. You, from your extra rations, will save a quarter of a kilo of bread a day. You will dry it at the back of your ski-shop stove, and hide it every day. I will find some sacking to make into bags. Skins you will need for extra clothing and footwear. The soldiers trap sables and the officers shoot them. They hang them on the outer wire. The men working outside must grab one a day. No one will miss them. Plan your own way out and then head south. Wait for a night when it is snowing heavily, so that your tracks are covered."

And then, almost as an afterthought: "Colonel Ushakov will be leaving for a senior officers' course at Yakutsk shortly. I would not want anything to happen while he was in command." A very loyal wife, this Ushakova.

I sought out Makowski immediately. "We are getting out," I said. "There will be a little help for us."

"How many men will you want?"

"About half a dozen," I said.

"Good! We'll find them. I know one I can personally recommend."

I thought of Kolemenos. "I know one, too. We'll start rounding them up tomorrow."

Makowski found the first recruit. He was a Pole, a sergeant in the cavalry named Anton Paluchowicz. I liked the look of Paluchowicz. He accepted the proposition like a good soldier undertaking a mission of war.

That evening I came up behind Kolemenos. I tapped him on the shoulder and he turned. He smiled. "Oh, it's you."

"Kolemenos," I said, "I am getting out of here with some others. Would you like to join us?"

"You mean it? Seriously?" I nodded. The big man smiled happily through his blond beard. "I shall come." He laughed aloud and brought the weight of his hand down on my shoulder. "I could carry you on my back if necessary. If we could come all that way from Irkutsk hanging on those bloody chains we can go a long way farther without them."

Now there were four of us. We began to plan with a sense of urgency. It was the beginning of April and I felt that we had not a great deal of time. We began to watch things closely. We noted, for instance, that the starting of the guard dog patrol around the perimeter at night was signalled by the yelping of the sledge dogs showing their annoyance at being left behind. That signal came only once every two hours. The patrol always went round anti-clockwise, covering the long south side first.

We decided that the escape must be through the southerly defences and that therefore we must get ourselves established in the end hut on that side. We began to bribe and cajole ourselves bunks in that hut.

Paluchowicz brought Zaro into the scheme. Eugene Zaro came from the Balkans—a Yugoslav, I think. He was thirty, and, before the Russians had caught up with him, had been a clerk. "If you want some fun on the way," said our sergeant, "Zaro is the man." Like an inspection committee, Makowski and Paluchowicz and I stood back and watched him in the food queue. He was a well-built man, and his almost black eyes had a constant gleam of laughter and mischief. The men around him roared in joyous gusts as Zaro stood there, his eyes twinkling in a mock-serious face. "All right," I pronounced, "we'll have him."

Escaper Number Six was brought in by big Kolemenos. He was a twenty-eight year old Lithuanian architect named Zacharius Marchinkovas. He was tall, spare-framed, with alert brown eyes. I was impressed at the manner in which he had already weighed the odds against us, and, having found them formidable, decided that the slightest hope of success was worth the attempt. An intelligent, likeable type, this Lithuanian.

When Sergeant Paluchowicz brought

into our hushed deliberations the name Schmidt, I thought this must be one of the Russo-German colony who had joined our prison train.

"Is he German?" I asked.

"His name is Schmidt, but I do not know," was the answer. "He speaks Russian very well and easily. He stands apart from the others. He does a great deal of thinking by himself and he gives me excellent advice on everything. I recommend him to you."

Next day Paluchowicz pointed Schmidt out to us. Makowski and I strolled over. My first impression was that he might be too old for the rigours of the adventure we were planning. I judged him to be about fifty. His thick hair and beard were tinged with grey. He had seen us coming and, probably because the sergeant had warned him, showed no surprise.

I spoke in Russian. He answered in Russian, "Walk towards the huts and I will join you."

Once clear of the crowd, we stopped. He faced us and smiled. "Gentlemen, my name is Smith. I understand you have a proposition."

Makowski and I stood there, mouths agape. "*Smith?*"

"I am Smith, Mister Smith. I am an American." He grinned happily at our astonishment.

"Forgive me," I said at last. "It is hard to believe. How did you get here?"

He had an easy, patient, almost professorial manner of speech. "I am an engineer and was one of a number cordially invited by the Soviet Government to help build the Moscow Metro. There were about fifty of us. That was nine or ten years ago. They arrested me in 1936, convinced themselves that I was a professional spy and gave me twenty years."

Sitting on a bunk in Makowski's hut, I cautiously outlined our plans. I told Smith that I had sound reasons for believing that only the long road south held any chance of success, although some of the others were still reluctant to drop the idea of the short route to the east.

He did not rush to answer. He asked a few shrewd questions. We sat silent as he thought things over. And then, "Gentlemen, it will be a privilege to join you. I agree that the south route is the best. You can count on me."

We sat long with Smith. All our histories, our Russian dossiers, followed a similar pattern. Smith was different. He was the odd man out, and he intrigued us. He told us much, but neither then nor ever did he tell us his Christian name. Later, when we six Europeans addressed one another familiarly by first names, the American was always, as he first introduced himself, Mister Smith to us all, the "Mister" somehow being accepted as a substitute for the name we were never told.

By the end of the first week in April we had all moved into the same hut. We were gathering an impressive store of skins, most of them pulled off the wires by Kolemenos on his frequent trips to pick up birch logs for the ski-shop. On the grindstone I flattened and sharpened a six-inch nail into an instrument that could be used to cut and pierce holes in the pelts.

Our final collection included sable, ermine, Siberian fox and, a real prize, the skin of a deer which one of the officers had shot for the pot. We cut long thongs of hide for lacing up the simple moccasins we fashioned in the nightly gloom of the hut. We plaited thongs together and used them as belts. Each man made and wore under his *fufaika* a warm waistcoat with the fur inwards to the body. And, finally, to protect the legs, we made fur gaiters.

At our next meeting I told Ushakova that I had found six friends. She did not ask me who they were and I do not think she wanted to know. She handed over to me a gift that was to be of inestimable value—an axehead. "That will be on my conscience all my life," she said. "It is the first thing I have ever stolen." I made a handle for it and Kolemenos wore it for safe keeping inside the back waist-band of his trousers.

One other priceless article I made in the ski-shop was a fine three-inch-wide knife a foot long. It was originally a section of broken saw blade which I heated in the workshop stove, hammered into shape and ground on the grindstone. The handle was two pieces of shaped wood tightly thonged together by long strips of deerskin.

The problem of making fire was one we already had the answer to. Here, where matches were counted a luxury, there existed an effective, if primitive, method which made use of a thick fungoid forest growth which the Russians called *gubka*, literally sponge. It could be tugged off the trees in sheets. It was then boiled and dried. The fire-making equipment was completed with a bent nail and a piece of flintstone. The dry *gubka*, a supply of which we all carried stuffed into our jacket pockets, readily took the spark from the flint and could be blown into a red smoulder. We all became experts in its use.

Sunday, April 6, marked the end of our preparations. We were all tense and ready to go. On that day Ushakova sent for me and said that her husband had gone to Yakutsk. She also handed to me seven bags which she had made from provision sacks, and these I managed to smuggle back to the huts.

We watched the weather, so essential a part of our escape plan. We wanted snow, big-flaked, heavy-falling snow, to screen our movements. Monday was cold and clear. On Tuesday there was wind-driven, icy sleet. Then later in the week came a day when a lead-grey and lowering sky gave us the boon we sought.

The snow thickened as the day went on. It began to pile up round the untrodden no-man's-land between us and the wire. At the midday break the seven of us met briefly. The word went round. "This is the day."

At about four in the afternoon, I left the ski-shop for the last time with my *fufaika* bulging with my hoard of bread and the knife-blade cold against my leg in my right boot. We drank our evening mug of hot coffee, and tensely talked over the final plans. Smith advised that we must not start our break too early. The camp must be allowed to settle down for the night before we moved. Midnight, he thought, would be a reasonable time to run for it. Meanwhile we must try to keep calm.

It was Zaro who had the preposterous idea of attending the Politruk's Wednesday evening indoctrination. We laughed at first and then Makowski said, "Why not?" We sat ourselves at the back and the Politruk beamed a faintly surprised welcome at us. We smiled right back at him.

It was the most exciting political meeting I have ever attended, although the excitement owed little to the speaker. The Politruk was in good form and gave us it all—Soviet culture, capitalist decadence and disintegration and the rest of it. It was, as far as we were concerned, his farewell speech, and we enjoyed it accordingly.

We stood up to go. "Good night, Colonel," we chorused.

"Good night," he answered.

Back in our hut the men were beginning to settle for the night. Smith and Zaro, in the bunk nearest the door, were to give us the starting signal. We all broke up and climbed on our bunks and lay there. Six of us lay wide awake and waiting, but big Kolemenos in the bunk below me was gently snoring.

I lay thinking and listening to the bumping of my heart. The hours dragged by. Gradually the hut grew quiet. There was loud snoring from someone. A man babbled in his sleep. Someone, barely awake, got up and stoked the stove near his bunk.

Smith tapped my shoulder. "Now!" he whispered. Gently I shook Kolemenos. "Now!" I repeated.

NEXT WEEK: A girl fugitive joins our bid for freedom

***The Long Walk* by Slavomir Rawicz will be published as a book by Constable on March 22, price 16s.**

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St. John Ervine

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Vanity
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Melted Away
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On The Scaffold
Barefaced Robbery
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2,024

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For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. Further 80 prizes of £1 have been posted, also awards to sharers of £25 Jackpot.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated March 3), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, February 18, for early news of No. 2,024 result.)

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